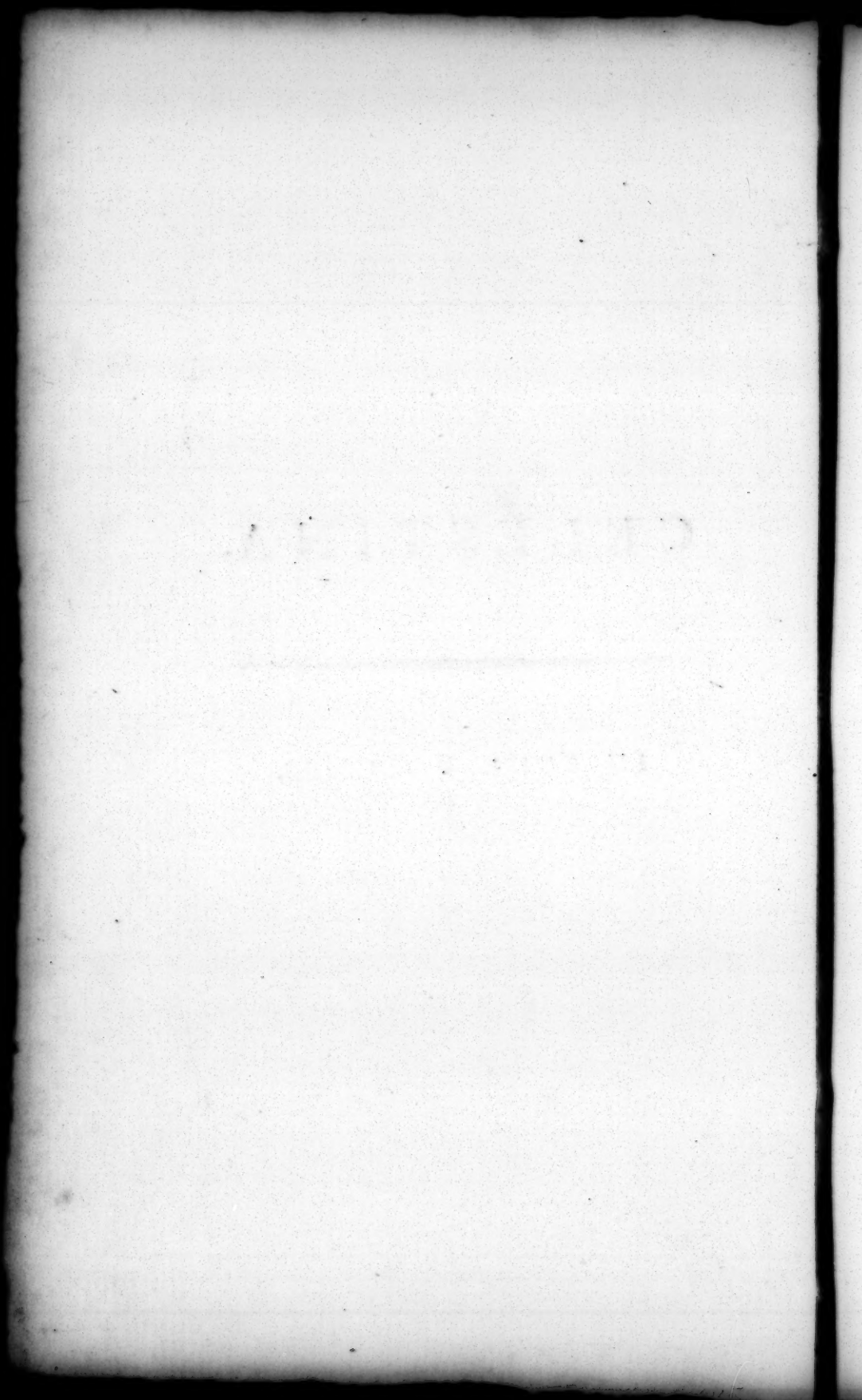


**CELESTINA.**

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**IN FOUR VOLUMES.**



# CELESTINA.

A NOVEL.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

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By CHARLOTTE SMITH.

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# CELESTINA.

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## CHAPTER I.

**W**HEN first Willoughby arrived in London, he had endeavoured to bring himself to a resolution of seeing Celestina; but her absence at that time on a tour of pleasure, and the assurances he received that she was engaged to Montague Thorold, not only diverted him from that intention, but gave his sister both time and opportunity to represent her as neither wanting or wishing for that attention, which he thought he should, as a friend, shew her. These insinuations had gradually their effect: not however in curing that invincible tender-

ness he always felt for her, but in mingling with it so much bitterness that his life became more than ever wretched. The accidentally meeting Celestina at an assembly, gay, unconcerned, and, as he believed, forgetting her former attachment to him in her new preference to Montague Thorold; the second meeting, which happened at the opera; and every thing that he heard both from his sister and in general conversation where Celestina was mentioned, all served to confirm this idea; while the letter which would have undeceived him, never reached his hands. It was left with Lady Molyneux; who, determined as she was to impede every advance towards a reconciliation between her brother and Celestina, made no scruple, on hearing from whom it came, to open, read, and, after some consideration, to destroy it.

Of the apparent neglect, therefore, which Celestina imputed to Willoughby, he had accused *her*; and thought, that if she had not determined to connect herself with  
Montague

Montague Thorold without any attention to his wishes or reliance on his regard, she would have written to or sent to him: while his neglect of a letter by which she thought she should awaken all the tenderness of friendship which she hoped he still retained for her, and the angry and disdainful looks with which he had twice met her, wounded both her affection and her pride. Thus, by the treachery of Lady Molyneux, all commerce even of civility was at an end between them; and such was the situation of Willoughby, when the Castlenorths arrived in London from Italy.

Embarrassed more and more in his affairs, and on the point of being overwhelmed with pecuniary distress, it was more than time that he should determine what to do; and this determination, the return of the Castlenorths to England was intended to hasten.

Always believing that to the artifices of Lady Castlenorth he had owed his being compelled to quit Celestina, and still hoping

to detect those artifices, he had, by frequent visits at his uncle's, and by a sort of tacit and reluctant acquiescence in many of his plans, given Miss Fitz-Hayman great reason to suppose that he intended fulfilling his original engagement with her: yet now that he saw he must either continue to act what he could not but feel was a dishonourable and disingenuous part, or break with his uncle entirely, his uneasiness became more insupportable. The tortures which he had felt in observing the favour Celestina had shewn to Montague Thorold, by whispering and laughing with him, gave him a cruel foretaste of what he should suffer were he to see her married to him; yet his reason, whenever he was calm enough to listen to it, told him how absurd, how improper it was, to indulge such sensations of anguish and regret; since, if the relationship which had been hinted at did really subsist between them, he could never take any other part in regard to her than a friendly and fraternal concern in her happiness;

ness ; and since the age, family, and circumstances of Montague Thorold were all without objection, he ought, if she believed such an alliance would make her happy, not only to rejoice in it but promote it.

From this, however, his heart absolutely revolted ; and all he could prevail upon himself to think of was, to make for Celestina some more ample provision if he was once convinced of their relationship, and to wish her happy : for to see her happy, when another was to be the object of her love, he found would be to him the cruellest punishment that Fate could inflict.

Sometimes he thought, that since every other woman on earth was indifferent to him, he ought to learn to approve of Miss Fitz-Hayman, of whose apparently increasing affection towards him he could not be insensible. But love was never yet the effect of effort ; and while he compared her, with all her laboured accomplishments, to Celestina, he found too certainly that he never could love her, and that with such

sentiments to promise it, was an unworthy prostitution of his honour.

His coldness, however, and visible reluctance, discouraged none of the other parties who desired this marriage: and Miss Fitz-Hayman, with all that pride which her birth, her fortune, and the exalted idea of her own merit, gave her, seemed to be, either from her affection to Willoughby or some other cause, content to receive his hand with the hope of afterwards winning his heart. Convinced that he had no attachment but to Celestina, and certain that the impediments between them must effectually prevent his ever again thinking of her with the fond partiality he had done, she seemed very easy as to his indifference towards herself; foreseeing, perhaps, that their lives would be such after they were married as would very soon produce it, if they did not set out with it: or, to judge more candidly, she might think with pride and pleasure of conquering, as his wife, that  
coldness

coldness to which, as his mistress, she could not be insensible.

Lord Castlenorth had so determined a predilection for the match, which the difficulties he had met with had by no means abated, that he would not see any thing that appeared inimical to this his darling scheme. His great object was—and he forgot his infirmities as he pursued it—to procure for Willoughby the reversion of all his titles, and to change his name to Fitz-Hayman. This he found would be attended with no great difficulty; and now, whenever he saw his nephew, he enumerated all the species of satisfaction which in his opinion would attend these acquirements, dwelling with great delight on the circumstance of the family arms remaining unchanged; though he offered to quarter those of Willoughby, if their owner found any reluctance in parting with them entirely.

From these harangues, which nothing could for a moment render interesting to Willoughby, *his* imagination was often quite

absent, and fled after Celestina, whom it represented as making the felicity of Montague Thorold, and enjoying with him that life of elegant and literary retirement, which he had himself fondly hoped to share with her. Frequently, when his uncle was talking to him of his ancestor, Reginald Fitz-Hayman, who in the reign of Henry IV. was slain by the celebrated Hotspur, then in rebellion, after having twice unhorsed him, describing the circumstances of the combat, and still more minutely the bearings thereupon granted in addition to their former coat, Willoughby, far from attending to him, was meditating on some walk he had taken with Celestina during their short happiness at Alvestone the preceding spring; on the remarks she had made, and the improvements she had suggested; and having no idea of what his uncle was talking about, only understanding by his tone when he ended a period, he said—"To be sure"—"Oh certainly"—"Very great"—"Undoubtedly"—without knowing or caring

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ing whether these words were well placed : while Lord Castlenorth was too much delighted with the pleasure of hearing himself talk on his favourite topic, to remark, that Willoughby knew not a syllable of what he was saying; and the latter had really acquired such a habit of inattention to those subjects about which his uncle paraded, that he not unfrequently had, in appearance, assented to plans relative to his fortune, and his residence after his marriage, when in reality he had not, on the discourse to which he seemed to listen, formed any one idea.

A few days only passed in this manner after the return of the Castlenorths to England, before the extreme pain he felt, the second time of seeing Celestina in public, made him sensible of his inability to continue long in this undecided and wretched state. From mere acquiescence in misery, or rather from an hope to escape from it by detecting Lady Castlenorth's schemes, he had become insensibly more deeply entan-

gled in them : and he now began to accuse himself of very unjustifiable conduct ; since not all the distressing circumstances of his fortune, nor the certainty of Celestina's being lost to him, nor the pleasure of saving his paternal estate, and particularly Alvestone, which, after Celestina, had always been his first object, could, on a strict examination of his own heart, lead him to form a serious wish of becoming the husband of Miss Fitz-Hayman : and he was conscious that every part of his behaviour that had raised contrary expectations, was owing rather to his despair of obtaining one woman than to his wish of being united to another.

His mind was now in such a state of continual debate and perplexity, that nothing had the power a moment to amuse or please him. His sister, without an heart herself, had no notion of the corrosive sensations that preyed on his ; his health, though far from being restored, was such as no longer offered her any prospect of becoming the heiress

heirefs to what family property was left; and ſince her brother did live, her wiſh was to have him live in ſplendour, graced with the luſtre of nobility, and reflecting honour on her by his affluence and proſperity. Her diſlike of Lady Caſtlenorth and her daughter was long ſince loſt in the more inveterate diſlike ſhe had conceived againſt Celeſtina, ſince ſhe had been ſo much ſeen in good company in London, and ſo much celebrated for her beauty: ſhe always therefore affected to conſider his marriage with Miſs Fitz-Hayman as a ſettled thing; and from the moment of the Caſtlenorths return to England, ſhe joined, with more zeal than her ſelfiſh indolence uſually permitted her to feel for any thing, in promoting it.

Thus beſet by his family, and on the other hand haraſſed by the encreaſing clamours of his creditors, who offered him only the ſad alternative of ſelling Alveſtone, and whoſe impatience was fomented by the artful management of Lady Caſtlenorth,

Willoughby

Willoughby for some little time lingered and hesitated: now thought that he ought to marry, when such advantages were to be acquired by it, now recoiled from the dreadful idea of passing his life with a woman who was indifferent to him, and whom he doubted whether he could ever learn to love. Even in the symptoms of her regard for him, which were unequivocal enough, there was something which rather disgusted than flattered him; and when he thought how different were their minds, their tempers, and their pursuits, no earthly consideration seemed to have sufficient weight with him, to make him resolve on putting on a yoke so uneasy to his imagination.

The repeated sight of Celestina made all his wounds bleed afresh. He found, that neither the suspicions of their relationship, or what he thought the certainty of her alienation from him, were strong enough to counteract the effect of the long rooted affection he felt for her: but he believed that if those suspicions once amounted to a certainty—

certainty—if once he was thoroughly convinced Celestina was his sister, he should learn to conquer every other sentiment in regard to her but what he might with honour indulge.

For this reason, and because he found some satisfaction in the delay this journey would give him a pretence for, and thought that mere change of place would afford him some relief, he determined to set out in search of that servant, Hannah Biscoe, to whom he had obtained a direction in Italy, and whom he had been detained from visiting partly by his ill state of health, and partly by the artifices of Lady Molyneux.

After she and Lady Castlenorth had met, however, her opposition to this journey was withdrawn; and he set out on horseback, attended only by his old servant, Farnham, intending to reach the village to which he was directed, and which was on the borders of Lancashire, by easy journeys.

Miss Fitz-Hayman, to whom he had  
said

said that every consideration urged him to a complete developement of the mystery now that it seemed to be in his power, saw him depart with an appearance of reluctance; but Willoughby had seen her, ever since her arrival in England, making parties for public places without him, if he happened not to be able or disposed to go; and found, that during his absence she would proceed in the same course of amusement; and that she and her mother would find no inconvenience for want of an escort, as they had brought over with them an Irish officer, who had been in the service of France, with whom Lady Castlenorth had contracted an intimacy a few years before in Italy, which in their last journey to the Continent had been renewed and increased: in consequence of which, Captain Cavanaugh had accompanied them to London, where he had apartments in the house, and was become one of the family. At all places of public resort he attended on Lady  
Castle-

Castlenorth; sat by her at the upper end of the table to carve for her; and acted as a sort of gentleman usher to the mother, while he treated the daughter with the most profound reverence and respect.

This gentleman was three or four and thirty. His face was handsome, and his figure, though large, uncommonly fine. He had seen a great deal of service and of the world: spoke all European languages, except English, well; and with all the animation of a Frenchman, had enough of the national character still about him, to mark him for an Irishman.

He was, indeed, sufficiently proud of his country, and piqued himself on being descended from the kings of Leinster; and Lord Castlenorth, to whom he contrived to render himself agreeable by a patient attention to long stories, by his knowledge of genealogy, by picking up for him old books of heraldry, and understanding the difference between a pale lozengy, and a pale engrailed\*; and affixing some importance

\* Terms used in Heraldry.

ance to the enquiry, whether one of the quarterings of the arms of Fitz-Hayman, should on strictness be on field argent, a boar's head, couped gules, or couped Or\*. Lord Castlenorth, among other doubts on this and equally important subjects with which he amused himself, sometimes considered whether the genealogy of Captain Cavanaugh might not be traced back in Ireland a generation or two beyond his own in Normandy, a circumstance which excited his respect, and gave, in his opinion, weight and value to those qualities by which the Captain contrived to render himself, throughout the family, so very acceptable.

Willoughby had seen him with them once or twice abroad, but had not then particularly noticed him among that crowd of all nations and descriptions which Lady Castlenorth contrived to collect around her there. He now saw him, not without a slight degree of surprise, domesticated in the family; but his whole attention seemed to be given to the elder members of it; and he

\* Terms used in Heraldry.

he hardly ever spoke to Miss Fitz-Hayman, who, when Willoughby one day took occasion to remark, that he was on a footing of greater intimacy than formerly, answered, with something like a careless sneer—"Oh, you know that Cavanaugh has long been my mother's great favourite."

In the societies of London, however, this intimacy became the subject of some malicious comments; and Lady Molyneux, who seldom let any thing of that sort escape her, could not forbear indulging herself in some remarks on Lady Castlenorth's friendship, even before her brother, who gave, however, so little attention to what he heard, that before he reached the end of his first day's journey he had forgot that such a person as the Captain existed, as he would probably have forgotten Lady Castlenorth herself, had not the purpose of his present journey, and all the transactions of the last twelvemonths of his life, brought her and the consequences of those

those transactions too forcibly to his memory.

While Willoughby was thus on his journey, the disquiet and unhappiness of Celestina, though she was compelled to appear to conquer them, were but little abated.

Nothing, in the opinion of Lady Horatia, contributed so much to wean the mind from indulging sorrow or encouraging weakness, as variety of company and continual dissipation; and in these, notwithstanding her reluctance, Celestina was continually engaged. She now, more than ever, regretted that she had relinquished that plan of life which she had fixed upon when first left, by the death of Mrs. Willoughby, to seek a new one. The quiet farm-house in Devonshire where Cathcart and Jeffy lived, the tender attention she should be there sure to meet with, the not unpleasing melancholy of Mrs Elphinstone, and the perfect seclusion she might enjoy from a world where nothing gave her any real pleasure, were ideas which were now always

ways returning to her mind with new power. There, she thought her sad heart might be laid open to the pitying sympathy of her first and most beloved friend, and find some satisfaction amidst its own disappointments in witnessing the happiness of that friend, to which she had been so greatly instrumental; and there she might wander whole days among the fields and copses, indulging herself in the repeating the name of Willoughby, in thinking of him, in reading again those books they had read together, painting the plants he admired, and composing melancholy verses, which above every other occupation soothed her mind. But when she had represented to herself all the mournful pleasure she should in such a situation enjoy, and half determined to gratify herself, the ingratitude of which she should be guilty towards Lady Horatia destroyed her resolves; and, alas! she recollected too, that at the farm of Jeffy she saw, from almost every field, and from some of the windows of the house, Alvestone Park, where

where Miss Fitz-Hayman would soon be mistress; the sight she thought she could not bear; and her mind turned with terror from the idea of it. There were also very strong objections against her going into the immediate neighbourhood of Montague Thorold, if she meant not to give him encouragement; and these considerations adding to the impracticability of her quitting, without better reasons than a mere wish of retirement, such a generous protectress as Lady Horatia, determined her to wean her mind from an inclination she could not properly indulge, and to move on as well as she could in the wearisome circle; till the time arrived when Lady Horatia set out on her summer tour, which was to begin by going to Matlock, from whence she was to go into Wales, and then end the summer at Cheltenham.

Vavasour had been so long absent, that Celestina began to hope his pride and resentment had subdued every wish to pursue her. In this, however, she was mistaken:

a few

a few days after the departure of Willoughby he called, and was admitted. Lady Horatia and Celestina, though neither of them were pleased to see him, yet received him with civility, and entered on common topics, such as the occurrences of the day afford; to these he appeared very inattentive, and turning abruptly to Celestina, he said—"Miss De Mornay, cannot I speak to you alone?"

She hesitated a moment, and then said—"I believe, Mr. Vavasour, there is nothing you can have to communicate to me, that ought to be a secret to Lady Horatia Howard."

"There is, Madam," returned he with quickness, and appearing much displeased with her apparent disinclination to oblige him, "for what I have to say relates in some measure to others, whose confidence I have no right to betray, whatever I may choose to do in those circumstances that relate only to myself."

Lady

Lady Horatia now rose, and said—  
“My dear, oblige Mr. Vavasour, if he wishes to speak to you without witnesses.”  
She then left the room.

“Now, Madam,” said Vavasour, as soon as she had shut the door—“now you have no longer an excuse to repulse or deny me: Willoughby assuredly quits you for ever: and nothing ought, nothing shall impede my pretensions. Emily—my poor Emily herself—on whose account I own to you I have hesitated more than once, wishes my success, and bids me say, that convinced my happiness depends upon you, she withdraws every claim which she had on my heart, and beseeches you to believe it is not unworthy your acceptance.”

“Emily, Sir?” cried Celestina, in some surprise: “of whom do you speak? and how can a person to whose very name I am a stranger, be likely in such a case to influence me?”

“Don’t affect,” said he, “the ridiculous prudery of disclaiming any knowledge of her,  
her,

her, because she does not rank among those who are falsely called virtuous women: by heaven she has virtues that might redeem the vices of half her sex; not one in a thousand of whom possess a twentieth part of her worth."

"I mean not," answered Celestina, mildly, "to dispute her value, but only to ask on what pretension you urge to me either resignation or opinions of a person with whom I have no acquaintance."

"Why will you pretend not to know her," resumed he, with redoubled impetuosity—"why affect not to know that Emily, who has lived with me almost twelve months, is the sister of your Mrs. Elphinstone, and of that Cathcart whom Willoughby picked up and placed as his steward at Alvestone."

"I have heard there is such a person," said Celestina: "but I did not know she lived with you."

"Yes, she has lived with me some time, though I did not till lately know her family."

mily. Unworthy and disgraced as you may think her, she should at this moment have been mistress of my house and my fortune, by what you would call legal claims, if I had not, like a cursed fool as I am, taken up a passion for you, which I cannot get rid of, and which my generous little girl not only knows, but with disinterested affection, instead of trying to dissuade me from it, wishes me to succeed in. I have sometimes fancied, that your knowledge of my attachment to her was in my way; and that circumstance, together with the eternal mystery that always hung over Willoughby's intentions—in short, my hopes of being cured of a damned folly, by reason and absence, instead of matrimony, have altogether made me refrain from visiting you lately. But now I think, since George is gone out of town, and returns only to be married to Miss Fitz-Hayman, there is an end of that; and for my experiment—curse me if I believe it will do; and so here I am again, more in love and a greater block-

blockhead than ever. Don't, however, mistake me, Celestina: I will not, I cannot bear to be trifled with; nor will I sacrifice one hour either to your coquetry or to the absurd partiality which I sometimes used to believe you had for that whining, snivelling Montague Thorold. If there are no other pretensions than his in the way, I shall soon know how to settle the matter."

"Really, Mr. Vavasour," said Celestina, as soon as he would give her an opportunity of speaking, "your conduct and manners are so eccentric, that it is difficult to know what to say to you, which you will not call either prudery or coquetry, or impute to a partiality for some other person. Permit me, however, to tell you, with that sincerity with which I have always spoke on this subject, that I am sensible of the honour you do me, but that I never can accept it, even though my situation were to be more humble than it is, and though such a man as Mr. Montague Thorold had never existed."

“ Oh ! very well, Madam,” cried Vava-four, impatiently interrupting her—“ You must, however, allow me to ask your objections: are they to my person ? my family ? my fortune ?”

“ I have already said, Sir, that they are all unexceptionable.”

“ Well, Madam, I must then infer from your refusal, that you are engaged.”

“ No, Sir, that inference by no means follows. Pardon me if I say, that notwithstanding all the advantages you possess, it is possible for a person to decline the honour of your addresses without being engaged.”

“ However, Madam, do you, or do you not deny that such an engagement does exist ? Of that, I think, I have a right to enquire.”

“ Forgive me, Sir, if I answer, that it does not seem to me that you have any right in the world to ask that question of me.”

“ Well, then, I shall ask it elsewhere.”

“ Where

"Where you have, if possible, still less right," said Celestina, alarmed at his vehemence.

"You are, however, very quick at understanding to whom I allude."

"Certainly, after what you have just said, I cannot mistake your meaning. You allude to Mr. Montague Thorold."

"Damn him," cried Vavasour, rising, and speaking with vehemence that made her shudder, "that puppy crosses me like my evil genius. By any man at all worthy of you, I might, perhaps, bear to be supplanted; but by such a silly fellow as that—no, damn it, there is no enduring it—curse me, if it does not make me frantic."

"Hear me, then, Mr. Vavasour—hear me for the last time—for I never will again willingly expose myself to this sort of treatment. *I am not* engaged to Mr. Thorold: it is not likely I ever shall be engaged to him; and farther, I again protest to you, that did no such person exist it would make no difference in the resolution I have made,

never to listen to the offers with which you honour me."

This declaration, repeated so strongly, served but to inflame those passions which Celestina hoped it would repress, and piqued his pride, without destroying what he called love. He walked backwards and forwards in the room a moment or two, and seemed to be reasoning with that extravagant warmth of temper she had complained of: but his eyes and his manner expressed plainly what he forbore to utter. After a while, he appeared to have conquered the inclination he felt to give way to the rage that possessed him; and sitting down by her, he softened his voice as much as he could, though it trembled through the variety of emotions he felt, and endeavoured to speak calmly while he said—"Celestina, if this be really the case—If I may venture to believe you, you will not surely refuse to satisfy me a little farther. I am not a vain coxcomb: but I know that neither my figure or my understanding are contemptible;

temptible; I have a very affluent fortune; and I have an heart that, as you well know, adores you. Willoughby cannot or will not marry you; of that I think you can no longer doubt. You say, that you are not engaged to the young Doctor Thorold; tell me, then, what there is, that, overbalancing so many points in my favour, renders them all ineffectual?"

"And I will tell you candidly, Mr. Vavasour. My objections then are to your morals—to your principles: they may not be, and I dare say are not, worse than those of other young men of fortune who have equal opportunities of following their own inclinations: but, however that may be, they are such as would inevitably make me unhappy; and knowing that, it would be extreme folly, were any advantages which affluence can offer to induce me to risk it."

"My morals!" cried Vavasour—"again my morals!—and pray what part of what you are pleased to call my morals is it that gives you so much offence?"

"All," answered she. "Your manner of life—your attachments—your connections, which you have just acknowledged you could not, without hesitation and reluctance, quit."

"Still you will misunderstand me. What I said in regard to Emily surely went to a very different meaning. I told you, that you are the only woman upon earth for whom I would quit her; and the greater my regard has been for her, surely the greater it makes out my attachment to you, for whom I would relinquish her. By heaven! I cannot tell how far my affection for her might have carried me, if my passion for you had not taken so deep root in my heart; and curse me, if amidst it all I do not still love her dearly, and would give half my estate to make her happy and re-establish her health; but poor dear girl—she will never, I am afraid, recover."

"If her illness is occasioned by her fears of losing you, Sir," said Celestina, "remove at once the cause of it by thinking of me

me no more. If you love her as much as you express, surely this cannot be difficult; and why, feeling this attachment to a person whom you think so deserving of it, should you, contrary to the dictates of reason, pursue one who never can return the good opinion you entertain of her."

"Because of my morals! Ridiculous cant and falsehood. Don't I know that women all like the very libertinism they are pleased outwardly to condemn? Don't I know that the proudest, the most prudish among ye, are flattered by the attention of those men who are called the greatest rakes, and that if any queer fellow sets up to be a moral man, ye all laugh at and despise him. This sort of stuff about morals, you have learned, I suppose, either from old parson Thorold, or this good motherly gentlewoman you live with: but you, who have so much sense, cannot seriously persist in such methodistical cant; and as to any objections about Emily——"

C 4

"Don't

"Don't mistake me, Mr. Vavasour. I made no mention of her in the way of objection."

"Well, then," cried he, interrupting her, "as to my morals, in every other respect, they are really exemplary. I play, comparatively, very little; I don't drink a fifth part so much as half the people I live with; and I reckon myself, upon the whole, a very orderly, sober fellow."

"By comparison only," said Celestina, half smiling at his way of making out the account.

"Aye, by comparison. Every thing in this world is, you know, good or bad only by comparison. Come, come, Celestina, I was willing enough to allow for your prepossession in favour of George Willoughby, but to any other I cannot, I will not submit; nor will I allow any thing to this damned prudery. I know myself worthy of you, highly as I think of you. Yes, I deserve you, if it be only for my persevering  
love;

love; and by all that's good I will not be denied."

"You really will, Sir," replied Celestina; who, more and more distressed by his perseverance, desired to put an end to it for ever if possible—"you really will; for I protest to you that I never can give any other answer than I have already given; and I beg, I entreat that you will desist from a pursuit that can produce for you only mortification."

"May perdition seize me if I do!" returned he, with renewed vehemence. "No! if I perish in the attempt, I will persevere!" He was proceeding in this strain, when Lady Horatia sent to let Celestina know she waited for her to go out; and she took the opportunity of hastening away, glad to be relieved from a conversation so distressing; while Vavasour, finding all attempts to detain her ineffectual, left the house in one of those paroxysms of passion, which disappointment, from his having never been used to submit to it, always produced.

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## CHAPTER II.

IT would be difficult to say, whether Willoughby, wandering and solitary among the remote villages of Yorkshire, or Celestina, surrounded in London by what the world calls pleasure and amusement, was the most internally wretched. Celestina's last dialogue with Vavasour, had convinced her that Willoughby no longer thought of her even with that degree of friendship and tenderness which he had so often assured her nothing should destroy: he was gone out of town merely to prepare for his marriage; and gone without deigning either to see her or answer the letter she had written to him. There was, in such conduct, so much unkindness and inhumanity, that she began to hope her reflections on it would,  
by

by degrees, abate the anguish she now felt: and she listened to Lady Horatia, who continually spoke of it as an unequivocal proof of Willoughby's want of an heart capable of a generous and steady attachment. To Montague Thorold, however (who now again returned to town after an absence on business of some little time), she could not listen with so much complacency as her friend wished; and she repeatedly told him, that the greatest obligation he could confer upon her would be to desist from talking to her of love. The certainty, however, there now seemed to be that Willoughby no longer considered himself as interested about her; her positive rejection of Mr. Vavafour, and the encouragement given him by Lady Horatia, to persevere, brought him continually to the house; where their morning parties of reading re-commenced; and whenever they went out of an evening, Montague Thorold was their attendant: thus drinking intoxicating draughts of love,  
and

and indulging hope that it would finally be successful.

Willoughby now found, without difficulty, the person he sought : and whether it was that she had her lesson more completely, or was permitted to speak plainer of what she knew, she answered all his enquiries in such a way as served to perplex, but not entirely to affirm the question, whether Celestina was his mother's daughter. The woman was, in her mind and ideas, one of the lowest of the vulgar : yet her simplicity seemed to be affected ; and all the proofs which had been talked of did not amount to her declaring that she was present at the birth of Celestina, or could produce any positive evidence of it. She spoke principally to the time when she said the little girl was at nurse at Kensington ; of which she related a great many particulars that staggered Willoughby more than ever, without convincing him : yet all the woman said, though it was consistent, had the air of having been learned by rote ; and there was about her a  
fort

fort of guarded cunning which seemed to have been acquired, or at least improved by long practice. Willoughby attempted to discover whether she had not received money from Lady Castlenorth, and to find what were her present means of subsistence : but for these enquiries also she seemed prepared ; and gave at least a plausible account of a legacy left her by a great uncle, that enabled her to live without servitude in her native country, where she boarded with a relation, and affected great piety and sanctity. She blessed God, she said, that she scorned, for the lucre of gain, to belye any one, dead or alive, much more her good mistress who was gone : but truth was truth ; and she hoped, by the help of God, always to speak it plain and direct, without fee or reward : “ and as for Lady Castlenorth,” added she, “ whom your Honour thinks has paid me for speaking of this thing, pray consider, your Honour, wherein it could be useful to my Lady to put me upon saying a falsity. If I was base enough to take money of my  
Lady

Lady for it, which to be certain I never did, for what would that be, as your Honour well knows, but selling my immortal soul? and what good, as I may say, would all the gold and diamonds in the world do me, if my precious soul was to perish because of them?"

This cant, to which Willoughby listened with continued patience, made him hope that he should, in some instance or other, convict her of inconsistency. But though he saw her repeatedly, and set Farnham to watch her still more narrowly, and to talk the matter over with her as if in confidence, she was always so guarded that no contradiction could be discovered; and after waiting near a week at the village, Willoughby was compelled to give up every idea of certainly coming at the truth, and to return towards London without being positively sure that Celestina was so nearly related to him; yet forced to allow that he could not, in contradiction to all he had heard of a child nursed in secret at Kensington, bring  
any

any sort of evidence on which he ought to rely that she was not so.

Sick at heart, and feeling too sensibly that all his future life must be unhappy, his mind sunk in total despondence. Too certain it was, that under such circumstances, he could not think of marrying Celestina: yet he was unhappily conscious that he could not bear to think of her marrying another. It was in vain he accused himself of something worse than folly. The moment his mind dwelt on that subject, he found that folly irresistible: and while he determined that one of the first things he would do on his return should be to make a provision for Celestina out of his remaining fortune, he sickened in recollecting that such a provision would probably but facilitate her marriage with Montague Thorold—and of Montague Thorold he could not think with patience.

Of his own situation in regard to the family of Fitz-Hayman, he thought with equal bitterness. He was but too conscious,  
that

that to obtain the information he wanted from Hannah Biscoe, which he had flattered himself would turn out very differently, he had renewed his attendance at the house of his uncle, and acted disingenuously and unlike himself. However indifferent or averse he was to his cousin, his honour forbade him any longer to trifle with those sentiments which she evidently entertained in his favour. What then should he do? This question came continually before him; and was continually debated without his being able to form any resolution on which he could for a moment rest without pain.

He sometimes thought, that, since in losing the only woman whom he could love, he had lost all that could render his life happy, it was immaterial what became of him; and that since he must be miserable, it might as well be in following, as in flying, from what he still thought was in some degree a duty—completing the engagement he had made to his mother on her death-bed. In doing this, he should gratify

gratify all his surviving relations, and retrieve his estate, which he must otherwise sell, as the mortgages upon it were rapidly devouring it: and to do this was, as he sometimes tried to persuade himself, to pay a debt he owed his ancestors. He had been educated by his mother in high ideas of the consequence and respectability, not only of her family but of that of his father; but of these prejudices his natural good sense had suffered very little to remain; so that if he now endeavoured to recall them in support of those arguments which he ran over in favour of his marriage, his understanding immediately revolted against them.

“I shall not only retrieve,” said he, “but augment my fortune: not only save Alvestone, but add to my present estates the family possessions of my mother, which will otherwise become the property of strangers: the honours too so long inherited by her ancestors will be mine.”

He frequently made efforts to fix his mind on these advantages; but the moment

ment he began seriously to investigate their value, he beheld them with contempt.

“ Ridiculous ! ” cried he. “ My ancestors ! What is this foolish family pride, for which I am meditating to sell my freedom, in acquiescence with narrow prejudice ? I shall have a large estate : but will it make me happier in myself, or more respected by those whose respect can afford me any pleasure ? I shall be called ‘ my Lord ’—a mighty satisfaction truly ! The vulgar—for with such empty sounds the vulgar only are delighted—will bow low to my Lordship, and I shall take place at county meetings above the neighbouring Esquires, who are now my equals. I shall have a bauble called a coronet painted on my coach door, and my hall chairs, and shall become one of the legislature, qualified for it only by the possession of that bauble. Perhaps half a dozen or half a hundred men and women of poor ambition, may court the notice and boast of the acquaintance of Lord Castlenorth, who  
would

would have let Mr. Willoughby remain unmolested by their kindness, and by such friends my house will be infested and my leisure destroyed. But I shall go to Court, and be named as having appeared at the drawing room; that will be very delectable certainly: and my wife's fine clothes will be described at full length, and the taste of my equipage be commended in all the newspapers. It will be there told of me, that I am gone to this or that of my country houses; and my six bays, or greys, or blacks, will be celebrated in Hyde Park, or be conspicuous in the roads within twenty miles of London; while a thousand insignificant insipid beings, whom I neither know nor desire to know, shall say 'what a beautiful carriage, what a well appointed equipage is that of my Lord Castlenorth.' All this felicity in the aggregate, and I know of no more that belongs to the possession of a title, is certainly well worth the sacrifice I shall make to obtain it; and my ancestors, 'from their airy clouds,' will be infinitely

infinitely delighted by the glory of their descendant.

“ But what will that descendant be in reality? a mercenary, a miserable wretch: condemned to pass his life with a woman, whom, if he does not loath, he does not love; to feel himself a purchased husband; and to have sold, in sad exchange, man’s best birthright, freedom, for a mess of pottage.”

To such soliloquies as these, succeeded determinations to carry no farther any semblance of attention to Miss Fitz-Hayman; but to go even from his present journey, and without passing through London, immediately abroad.

To a mind unable to resist misery, there frequently appears a possibility of flying from it; and while Willoughby dreaded the thoughts of returning to London, he fancied that if he could cross over from Hull to the north of Europe, he should leave some part of his present unhappiness behind him. Unsettled and unhappy as he was,

was, these debates with himself, these vague plans of quitting every thing and becoming a wanderer on earth, became more usual with them: but still he decided on nothing. The idea of being compelled to sell Alvestone was the only one, however, that had great weight with him. To think that the place to which he had been so fondly attached should become the property of some upstart man of sudden fortune was accompanied by a sensation of acute uneasiness. He imagined, those beautiful woods, the growth of centuries, fallen in compliance with the improving taste of a broker or a warehouseman; the park ploughed up, to be converted into farms; and the elegant simplicity of his house and his grounds, destroyed by Gothic windows or Chinese ornaments; the shrubberies where he had wandered with Celestina, that turf, where he had ran by her side when she was learning to ride, and where they used to walk arm in arm together; that house, where he had hoped she would preside, and grace so  
lovely

lovely a scene with a mistress yet more lovely; all, all were to become the property of another! and the very name of Willoughby, and what was yet more painful, the name of Celestina, should never more, in those scenes, be remembered. Yet in a moment the cruel truth occurred to him, that whether this place belonged to him or to another, Celestina would never again visit it; that he should never again hear her voice calling him among the beech woods, or trace her footsteps on the turf; never listen to her as she read in his mother's dressing room, or hold her hand within his as they sat together on the woody banks of the water-fall, and marked its sparkling current leap from rock to rock. And without her, what would Alvestone be but a place where every spot would be haunted by melancholy images of departed happiness. How little the indulgence of these painful contemplations would be interrupted, or put an end to, by any satisfaction he could derive from the conversation  
of

of Miss Fitz-Hayman, his sick and reluctant heart too plainly told him: and then he again believed himself determined to sell all his estates and quit England; if not for ever, at least till time, absence, and the impossibility of his changing it, had better reconciled him to that destiny which condemned him to give up Celestina, and to see her in the arms of another.

A desultory and unsettled life had within the last year become habitual to him; and while he was actually moving from one place to another, his spirits preyed less corrosively on themselves. Since to live as he wished to have lived in his own country was impossible, he thought he should regret it less while he was wandering over others: and since he could not now contemplate the face and character he so fondly loved, he hoped that variety of characters and variety of faces would divert his regret, if they could not cure his attachment. There was, too, an idea of freedom and independence, which accompanied his thus  
shaking

shaking off at once every incumbrance, that was not without its charms; and in this disposition he thought contemptuously of mere local preference as unworthy a strong mind, and determined to become a citizen of the world; and when in his imagination he had settled his route, through Holland and France to Sicily, which he had long wished to see, and from thence to the Archipelago, he breathed freer, and felt himself more reconciled to existence.

He journeyed, however, slowly towards London while these debates were carrying on: and at York, whither he had ordered his letters to be directed, he found one from Cathcart which related some circumstances in regard to his affairs that convinced him he could not, unless to the material injury of some persons who were connected with him, quit England without some regulation of those pecuniary concerns which he had so long neglected and would now willingly have escaped from. This letter determined him to return to  
London;

London; though another letter from his sister, in which she mentioned, as an article of news, that Celestina was either actually married to Montague Thorold, or on the point of being so, threw him into a state of mind bordering on distraction: reason, which had long fruitlessly contended against this fatal, and perhaps guilty attachment, now seemed tired of a contention so hopeless, and his mind became a chaos of conflicting passions, all equally destructive to his mental and bodily health.

To return to London, however, was become necessary; and Farnham, his old faithful servant, persuaded him to take post-chaises for the rest of the journey. He arrived, after an absence of above three weeks, at the house of Lady Molyneux; and there heard that, a few days before, Lady Horatia Howard had publicly spoken of Celestina's marriage with the young divine as a settled thing; that his father had bought for him a considerable living in Gloucestershire, where they were to reside,

and where a curate was settled till he was himself qualified to take it; and thither, as there was a very good house upon it, they were going immediately after their marriage. Willoughby heard all this without being able to make any reply, and then hastened to his own lodgings, from whence he dispatched Farnham for intelligence from the servants of Lady Horatia. The coachman, with whom he had some time before made an acquaintance, and who was a very talkative fellow, immediately informed him of all he knew, and much that he imagined. He said it was very true, that Mr. Thorold lived almost always at their house; "and my Lady," said the man—"my Lady loves him for all the world as if he was her own son. There they are all morning reading play books and such together, as my fellow-servants tell me, that is, my Lady and Miss, and this here young divine as is to be; and then they goes out in my coach, all's one as if they belonged to the same family; and I do

do understand as how my Lady is to give her a portion, and they be to be married out of hand, that is, in a little time; and I believe that's the very truth of the thing, for my Lady have bought another coach-horse within these ten days, and told me—"Abraham," says she, "I shall go early next month into Cloucestershire, instead of going to Matlock as I talked of, and I shall go in the coach instead of the post-chaise, because I have some friends with me."

This account, which Farnham faithfully repeated to Willoughby, confirmed, almost beyond a doubt, all Lady Molyneux had related to him. Some more recent intelligence that he had received from Cathcart, as to the embroiled state of his affairs in the country, combined to render him desperate: and he had been so long harassed between his love and his interest, his honour and his reluctance, that he suddenly took the resolution of putting it out of his own power to undergo again such variety of torments: like a wretch who leaps from a

ship on fire into the sea, though certain of meeting death in another shape, he formed the determination of making himself, since he must be wretched, as completely wretched as possible. He thought of Celestina as his relation in vain; it abated nothing of that anguish with which he considered her as the wife of Montague Thorold; and so hideous were the images that forced themselves upon him, that he found his reason had no power to subdue them, and thought that nothing could so decidedly oblige him to check them as his marriage; and without giving himself time to consider how desperate was the remedy, he went immediately to the house of Lord Castle-north, declared to him that he was satisfied as to the object of his journey, and took the most immediate opportunity, after his return, of expressing his solicitude to avail himself of his cousin's generous predilection in his favour, and to fulfil the wishes of his deceased mother and surviving family.

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The eager and tremulous manner in which he uttered all this, and which was in reality the effect of despair and anguish, Lord Castlenorth mistook for the anxiety and impatience of love. His nephew had never spoke thus decisively before; and seeing thus what he had so long fondly wished for out of doubt, his first idea was, to proceed instantly in securing to Willoughby the reversion of those titles on which he set so high a value himself. While, therefore, he sat out in his chariot, supported by Mrs. Calder, who always attended him, to solicit the completion of a business which had hitherto proceeded but slowly, and fancied the happiness of all parties would be wonderfully advanced by his success, Willoughby, with such sensations as a determined suicide alone could envy, was making to Lady Castlenorth the same declaration; and was immediately afterwards allowed, or rather desired, to present himself at the feet of her fair daughter.

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CHAPTER III.

TO play the lover is not difficult to most men, even where their hearts are not really interested. A few fine speeches, a little common-place declamation, are easily produced and generally accepted: but Willoughby, always a very poor dissembler, and who felt, in despite of every effort to repress them, sentiments towards Miss Fitz-Hayman, bordering on antipathy, was very conscious that he should ill answer her ideas of a passionate lover, and this consciousness deprived him of the little power he might otherwise have had to dissemble.

He now, with increased confusion of thought, repented that he had gone so far; but to recede was impossible; and with a countenance expressive rather of perturbation

tion and wretchedness than of the pleasurable sensations inspired by successful love, he entered the apartment where Miss Fitz-Hayman had been prepared by Lady Castlenorth to receive his tender professions.

He approached her, and took her hand; muttered something about the final eclaireissement of his doubts as to another person (for he dared not trust his voice with the name of Celestina), and something about being, in consequence of that eclaireissement, released from his former engagements: then, in a still more tremulous and uncertain tone, he solicited her permission to dedicate his life to her service, and to hasten those preparations for his happiness, which his former uncertainties and embarrassments had put it out of his power to solicit with that ardour which he should under other circumstances have evinced.

The falsehood he was uttering died away almost inarticulately on his lips, and his revolting heart reproached him for it, faint and reluctant as it was. As he finished his speech,

Miss Fitz-Hayman turned her large black eyes, which had till then been modestly cast down, full upon him. She seemed to have been trying to make them speak tenderness; but to him they expressed nothing but an imperious enquiry into the truth of his professions, from which he shrunk. In a moment, however, those eyes, so little calculated for the soft parley of affection, contrived to overflow with tears. She gave him the hand he had just before let go, and inclining her head tenderly towards him, said, in terms as gentle as she could command—" Oh! Willoughby, you know too well, you have long known my unfortunate partiality towards you—a partiality which, with reluctance and regret I own, not all your too-evident coldness has conquered. Alas! could I now believe you sincere!——"

" Believe it, I conjure you," cried he, in a hurried voice, and hastening to put an end to a dialogue which he found he could so ill support—" Believe it, dear Madam!  
and

and believe (what is true also)—that I have now no other engagement—no other attachment—and cannot but be—be truly sensible of your extraordinary merit.”

“I will believe it,” answered she: “I will endeavour to believe it, for I find, that even if I am deceived, the deceit is dear to me.”

Willoughby then kissed her hand with as much warmth as he could affect; and running over, in the breathless tremor which consciousness of his dissingenuous conduct occasioned, a few common-place sentences about eternal gratitude and unalterable love; speeches which have probably been repeated ten million of times with as little sincerity, but seldom with so much self-reproof, he led her to talk of preparations, equipages, and jewels; subjects on which she entered with such ease as shewed that her mind had been familiarized to consider them, and that they were not without importance in her opinion. Poor Willoughby, who now felt his fate irretrievable, had

very different sensations. Oppressed and bewildered by a variety of sufferings, yet compelled, by the part he had thus rashly determined to act, to stifle them all, his prevailing idea was, that since the Rubicon was now passed, the sooner this dreaded marriage was over the better for him; since his mind must then combat, with more force than it could now do, those wild eccentricities, the offspring of despair, which were crowding fast upon him. He therefore pressed for an early day; not with the vehemence of love, but with that of a wretch who, knowing he must die, wishes to hear his physician fix the period when his torments are likely to end. Miss Fitz-Hayman, however, either could not or would not discover this; and though his inflamed eyes, his short sighs, unsettled manner, and broken sentences, gave him altogether the appearance rather of a man suffering under some recent calamity than of a favoured and fortunate lover on the point of obtaining his happiness, the lady, either from her confidence

dence in her own charms, or from some other cause, was perfectly satisfied with his behaviour; and before he left her, promised that she would not oppose the arrangement which she understood to have been made by her father—that in three weeks he should receive her hand.

This then was determined without a possibility of recall; and Willoughby, too sensible already of the weight of those chains which he had thus hastily forged for himself, now disengaged himself as soon as possible, and ran out of the house, impatient to be alone, and to contemplate in the stillness of his own room the prospect of misery into which he had thus rashly bound himself to rush. He walked very fast, and as if he was flying from himself, towards his lodgings in Bond-street, where, as he passed along it, a crowd of passengers near one of the crossings impeded his passage. He regarded them not; but made his way eagerly among them, till he was immediately between a footman who waited at  
the

the door of a coach, and a young lady who was coming out of a shop to step into it. On his pressing rather hastily before her, the servant put him back with his hand. Willoughby, out of humour at that moment with himself and with all the world, and fancying the action of the footman impertinent, spoke to him very harshly, and was almost provoked to strike him, when the lady, who had her foot on the step, appeared a good deal alarmed, and no sooner heard the sound of his voice thus menacing, than she caught the servant's arm for support; and at the same moment Willoughby, who had not till then seen her face, beheld the lovely but pale and terrified countenance of Celestina!

Thrown entirely off his guard, and not knowing what he did, he took the hand with which she had supported herself against the servant. "Celestina!" cried he—"Oh God! is it you, Celestina?"

She looked at him with eyes where surprise was softened by tenderness, and tried

to recover voice enough to utter more than—"Willoughby!" which the immediate emotion drew from her: but he gave her not time; for fixing his eyes on her's, all that she had been to him, all that he believed she was now to another, and all that he had just agreed to be himself, rushed upon his recollection at once, and in an agony of grief, remorse, and despair, he threw her hand from him, and turning away, he walked, or rather ran towards his lodgings as if he had been pursued by the furies, where, without giving his servant time to open it, he rapped at the door with violence enough to break it down; so fearful he seemed of again seeing Celestina as she passed in the coach, which, by the horses being in that direction, would, he thought, come that way.

Farnham, his servant, who opened the door, was amazed at his impatience so unlike his usual manner, and with still more surprise saw him, instead of speaking and enquiring for letters, as he always did when  
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he came in, and was particularly likely now to do after so long an absence, rush by him as if he had not seen him ; and hurrying up stairs by two steps at a time, shut the door of the dining room with a violence that shook the whole house, and turn the key.

This faithful servant had lived with him from the time of his leaving school, and was more attached to his master than to any other person on earth. He had seen with deep concern the sad change that had happened in his health and in his temper, since that unfortunate night when he so suddenly left Alvestone the year before, and had, in all his journeys and all his illness, watched over him with assiduous and attentive care. He had often known him dejected, and almost sinking under his uncertainties and his disappointments, but had never till now observed such fury in his eyes and marks of desperation in his manner ; and alarmed at the circumstance of his having locked the door of his room, Farnham was immediately beset with numberless fearful conjectures.

He

He was aware that his master's affairs were far from being prosperous, and imagined it possible that he might be pursued for debt: and as he knew his pride would render such a thing almost insupportable, he feared lest in the sudden agony to which it might subject him, he might commit some violence on himself. Willoughby's temper was naturally very mild, and not easily inflamed to anger; but when that did happen, his anger was dreadful; and though Farnham had only once or twice seen it excited during his long service, he knew how terrible it was when thoroughly roused.

The conjectures that Farnham entertained were not to be supported calmly; and though he had always received strict orders never to enter the room where his master was busy, till he rang or called for him, he was now strongly tempted, yet dared not determine to disobey his commands. He could not, however, forbear going to the door and listening. He heard his master utter deep and convulsive sighs:  
he

he heard him walking by starts in the room; but, by the key's being left in the lock, he could see nothing. He then went softly into the bed chamber; and from thence a defect in the door, which opened from it into the dining room, enabled him to distinguish that Willoughby now sat by a table on which his arms were thrown, and on them he rested his head; while his hair, all in disorder, concealed every part of his face: then in a moment starting up, he traversed the room with quick and uncertain steps, now clasping his hands together, now throwing them wildly abroad. At length he stopped, and striking his forehead, said, in a voice rather resembling groaning than speaking—"Oh accursed, accursed wretch!—what hast thou done!"

Still more alarmed by these words, and by beholding the frantic gestures with which his master now leaned against the side of the chimney, now flew to the other side of the room, and now threw himself on a sofa, Farnham again debated with himself whether

whether he should not go in at any event. There was a *couteau de chasse* and a sword hung up in the room, and two brace of pistols in their cases, which Farnham had just put there, loaded as they were when his master travelled; and the poor fellow fancied that on these, whenever he passed them, his master looked wildly eager. This might be some time fancy: but at length, either from accident or from his feeling at that instant some horrible temptation to escape from the evils that just then appeared quite intolerable, Willoughby stopped with folded arms opposite to these instruments of destruction, and while his expressive countenance was marked with the severest anguish, he murmured inarticulately some words which Farnham interpreted as a determination to put an end to his sufferings. Bent, at any hazard, to prevent his executing this fearful threat, the affrighted servant now searched with trembling hands for the lock, which he forgot he could not open. His master demanded,  
in

in a voice which struck him with terror, who was there? when luckily for him a thundering rap at the street door gave him hopes that some visitors might be coming who might more properly and effectually interfere, and he flew down to let them in, regardless of Willoughby, who, coming out to the top of the stairs, called to him, and peremptorily ordered him to admit nobody.

It was Sir Philip Molyneux; who having just met Lord Castlenorth at the Minister's levee, had heard from him that Willoughby, immediately on his arrival in town, had agreed to the conclusion of his marriage; and that in consequence of it he had himself been attending the levee to hasten the affair of the reversionary titles, which affair was likely to be speedily concluded. Sir Philip, therefore, having received this intelligence, called as he went home to congratulate his brother-in-law, and to take him to dinner in Portman-square.

Little

Little accustomed as Sir Philip was to make remarks on any body's appearance, and particularly on that of his inferiors, he was notwithstanding struck with the countenance of Farnham, as, pale and aghast, he opened the door to him; and as he went before him up stairs, he enquired what ailed him. "I hardly know indeed Sir," replied Farnham: "but my master, who came from Barnet only early this morning, as you know I suppose Sir, off his Yorkshire journey, has been out somewhere since, and is come home in such a humour as I am sure I have never seen him in in all the years I have lived with him: be so good, Sir, however, as not to take notice that I spoke about it."

Sir Philip had no time to promise he would not, before they were at the door of the dining room, where Willoughby stood and sternly said to his servant—"How dare you, Sir, disobey me in this manner? did I not tell you, stupid hound, that I would not be at home?"

"Lord,

“ Lord, Sir,” cried Farnham in great distress, for he was little accustomed and could hardly bear to be thus harshly reproved—“ Lord, Sir—it is only Sir Philip—and I am sure I thought——”

“ Curse on your thoughts!” cried Willoughby. “ Blockhead—are you to think for me?”

“ Hey-day!” said Sir Philip, “ what’s all this? Don’t be angry with poor Farnham. I would come in, for I was impatient to wish you joy.”

“ Joy, Sir?—of what?”

“ Why I have this moment seen Lord Castlenorth, who has told me that every thing is settled at last. Come, I’m very glad to hear it, for it must be owned that this business, George, has advanced but slowly. Well! so now ’tis to be done directly? The old peer was quite frisky upon it, and forgot his asthma and his gout to stand till I was tired of hearing him, telling me of the regulation he had made as to your name: he becomes Earl and Viscount Castlenorth;

tlenorth; and you take, as your title, that of Baron Ravensburgh. I heard the history too of how that came into the family. Well, but George, you'll go dine with us. Lady Molyneux will be glad, perhaps, to hear about it, and to wish you joy."

"Joy—damnation rather!" muttered Willoughby, as, snatching away his hand, he fled to the other end of the room: then by an effort recovering himself a little, he returned towards Sir Philip, and said, with forced calmness—"Prythee don't teize me with these hateful common place congratulations. Surely it is bad enough for a fellow to be forced to hear them afterwards, and indeed bad enough to be married, without having them rung in his ears for a month before hand."

Sir Philip, who now saw very plainly that his reluctance was by no means subdued, had no inclination to argue the matter with him. He had no idea why he might not be happy with Miss Fitz-Hayman or any other woman of equal fortune: but whether he  
was

was so or no, his own solicitude went no further than that his brother-in-law might not be reduced either to a state of indigence, such as might disgrace his alliance, or compel him to borrow money of his relations; and as Willoughby's marriage with Miss Fitz-Hayman would preclude the possibility of any such awkward circumstances, he heartily wished it, and had of late forgot his usual apathy to join with his wife in promoting it.

There was, he thought, no occasion for argument in the present case, since the affair was now, whether Willoughby liked it or no, irrevocably fixed upon. He therefore spared himself the fatigue of remarks or remonstrances on Willoughby's behaviour, and only said—"But you'll dine with us, George, to-day—will you not?"

"No, I cannot," replied Willoughby.

"To-morrow then. We shall have a large party, and dine exactly at seven o'clock."

"I will if I can. But I can engage for nothing. I hate to be fettered by engagements :

ments : but if I can come I will. Shall I ring for your servants ?”

“ They are at the door,” said Sir Philip, who immediately went away, without having any great reason to be satisfied with the politeness of his brother-in-law. Of that, however, he thought not ; and if the behaviour of Willoughby afterwards occurred to him at all, it only created a momentary surprise, mingled with some degree of pity, which his absurdity, and not his evident unhappiness, excited.

His visit, however, had the effect of rousing Willoughby from that dreadful condition of mind into which the step he had taken that morning in regard to Miss Fitz-Hayman, and the sudden sight of Celestina had thrown him. He now became able to collect his thoughts ; and was at once conscious of the general folly of his conduct, and of his cruel behaviour to Farnham, who was so hurt by having seen his master in such a state, and by the unkind and unusual way in which he had spoke to him,  
that

that when the poor fellow came up to enquire if he would please to dress, the tears were in his eyes, and he was hardly able to speak.

Willoughby was of too noble a nature not to apologize for his fault the moment he felt it. He answered mildly, that he should dress directly; and then said—“Farnham, I spoke angrily to you just now, and I am sorry for it. I was vexed, and could not command my temper. You were wrong too in letting in Sir Philip Molyneux. Another time remember that when I give orders to be denied, I except nobody, unless I particularly name them.

Poor Farnham dared not say why he then ventured to disobey him; but in the most humble terms begged his pardon, and said he was very sorry. “Well, well,” cried Willoughby, with a deep sigh, “and I am very sorry, Farnham, that I was so foolishly passionate. Let us think no more of it.” He then bade him get his things to dress, and tried, by taking up a book, to divert

divert his thoughts from himself, and obtain at least a respite from the corrosive reflections that pursued him; but it would not do: he threw the book away, and felt, notwithstanding all his efforts, his wretchedness and impatience returning: while Farnham, who as he dressed his hair watched every turn of his countenance, saw but too plainly that his master was half distracted by something into which he dared not enquire. This gave a sort of unquiet slowness to his manner, which Willoughby observing, was on the point of relapsing into that sort of behaviour for which he had but the moment before expressed his sorrow, and impetuously bade him mind what he was about and make haste: then hardly suffering him to finish his hair, he started up, and putting on his clothes in the haste that denoted the unquietness of his mind, he sent for a hackney coach, and ordered it to set him down at the hotel in Soho-square. Farnham still apprehending that some fatal event might follow all the agitation of

mind which he had witnessed, now approached again, and asked if he should be at home in the evening, or sup at home? To which Willoughby, no longer able to check himself, answered—"no!" as he drew up the glass, in an accent that terrified poor Farnham; who, more and more confirmed in his notion that something was about to befall his master, now concluded that something was a duel. The pistols and the sword indeed were still hanging up in the dining-room: but yet he could not be easy; and, after some consideration, he determined to go and enquire among the servants at Sir Philip Molyneux's, and at Lord Castlenorth's, if they could at all guess what was the matter; and with most of the latter he was particularly acquainted, by having been much with them at Florence and Naples when his master was last abroad.

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CHAPTER IV.

**I**F Willoughby was so deeply affected by the sight of Celestina, the sudden shock she had received from their abrupt meeting, and from his strange behaviour, had on her an equally painful though a different effect. That the impulse of the moment had urged him to take her hand, made her hope that some remains of affection for her yet lingered in his bosom, and that his former regard was rather stifled by anger, than annihilated by indifference. She knew that the first might be removed, and that she might be restored to his friendship; but that if his heart had once become quite cold towards her, nothing could ever renew even that share of tenderness with which she could

learn, if not to be happy, at least to be content.

It was some time before she could recover from the agitation of spirits into which this unexpected interview had thrown her: but when she at length became calm enough to reflect on it, she determined to say nothing of having seen Willoughby to Lady Horatia, as she knew it would appear to her only a fresh instance of his unworthy treatment of her; on which, how severely soever she felt it, she did not love to hear any comments, even from her best friends. With all the resolution she could collect, therefore, stifling her internal anguish, she prepared to go with a large party in the evening, to Ranelagh.

While she was dressing for this purpose, a servant brought up to her the following letter:

“MADAM,

“That a stranger, and a stranger in  
“my situation of life, should address you,  
“would

“ would possibly appear, to any less gene-  
“ rous mind than yours, a liberty that  
“ should be repulsed with disdain and re-  
“ sented by contempt: but I am persuaded  
“ that from you *I* may expect that liberal  
“ candour with which true virtue and un-  
“ affected goodness considers even those  
“ whom the generality of the world agree  
“ to condemn and despise.

“ You know, Madam, what I have  
“ been and what I am. From Mrs. El-  
“ phinstone you have probably learned  
“ what were the circumstances of my early  
“ life; and Mr. Vavasour, with that since-  
“ rity which deserves to be so highly va-  
“ lued, has told you how long I have been  
“ under his protection.

“ He has since, Madam, expressed  
“ some fears that this information may have  
“ been prejudicial to his interest with you,  
“ and lest it should be so, allow me to  
“ declare to you, that I know myself too  
“ well to believe for a moment that I ought  
“ to be in question where you are beloved

“ —too well to hesitate in declaring, that  
“ attached as I am to Mr. Vavasour, *I* can  
“ never make him so happy as he deserves  
“ to be.

“ No, Madam; that happiness depends  
“ entirely on you. Such a passion as he  
“ feels for you, I believe no other person  
“ can deserve; and I know him to have  
“ so good a heart, I desire his felicity so  
“ sincerely, that I hazard this step in the  
“ hope of promoting it.

“ Mr. Vavasour’s generosity has left me  
“ nothing to fear for the rest of my life,  
“ were it even to be a long one: but I feel  
“ that a very few months will bring it to  
“ an end; and I feel it without concern;  
“ for, thoughtless and unworthy as my con-  
“ duct has been, I have never found in  
“ its most brilliant periods, that the glitter-  
“ ing trappings bestowed by mercenary  
“ love, could quiet the throbbing heart  
“ that beat beneath them: and now my  
“ only wish is, to be forgiven, and re-  
“ ceived by my family, and to pass the  
“ short

“ short remainder of my days with them.  
“ You can intercede with them successfully,  
“ for they can refuse you nothing. Deign  
“ then, Madam, to interest yourself for me,  
“ and at the same time be assured, that it is  
“ my purpose to withdraw myself for ever  
“ from Mr. Vavasour, whenever he will suf-  
“ fer me to go, which shall, he says, be  
“ whenever you will give him hopes of  
“ listening to him.

“ If generosity, sincerity, good nature,  
“ and understanding, may be sufficient re-  
“ commendations to your good opinion,  
“ Mr. Vavasour eminently deserves it;  
“ and whatever faults he may have, your  
“ virtues will correct. He knows no-  
“ thing of my writing to you; but I am  
“ conscious that I owe *him* such an effort,  
“ where the felicity of his future days is  
“ concerned, and I feel that in addressing  
“ *you*, my presumption, if not successful,  
“ will be forgiven.

“ I have the honour to be,

“ MADAM,

“ Your most obedient servant,

“ EMILY CATHCART.

Celestina could not peruse such a letter without a mixture of admiration and pity for the amiable unhappy writer. Though her resolution in regard to Vavasour could not be changed, she thought that she should no longer delay acquainting Mrs. Elphinstone and Cathcart with the information she had obtained relative to their sister; but it required some consideration, at least in regard to Cathcart. The circumstance of Emily's letter added to the flutter of spirits which the meeting in the morning had given her. Montague Thorold, who dined with Lady Horatia, and was to be one of their party at Ranelagh, contrived to be more than usually importunate with her for more pity and favour than she had lately shewn him: while the ladies and Mr. Howard, who joined them in the evening, completed her anguish and confusion, by talking of the marriage which was in a few days to take place between Miss Fitz-Hayman and Mr. Willoughby. One of these was  
acquainted

acquainted with Mrs. Calder, and had heard from her that morning that every thing was settled, the title arranged, the equipages and liveries bespoke, and the jewels and clothes concluded upon, all of which she detailed at great length; while another said, that *she* understood that the marriage was to take place at Castlenorth, and that from thence all the family were to proceed together to Italy, where they were to pass a twelvemonth. All, however, agreed that it was certainly to be concluded immediately, and Celestina could not any longer entertain a doubt of it.

Though her heart had always revolted from the idea of Willoughby's union with Miss Fitz-Hayman, she had been now so long accustomed to think of it, that she felt less poignant concern on that account, but if possible more than ever from his continued coldness, and the cruel neglect he had been guilty of in not answering her letter. "That he marries another," cried she, as she reflected on it, "I

might learn to submit to without murmuring, if it can contribute to his ease or happiness in any way; but that he should quite desert and forsake me after so many assurances of esteem and regard, even when love was no longer in question; that he should disdain to own that connection by blood, if he is sure that it is so, which made him, with so much apparent reluctance, relinquish every other; that he should without pity leave me to a destiny which owes its unhappiness to him, seems so strange, so unnatural, so unlike him!—If I could once see him, hear him talk to me with friendly calmness, and tell me that he felt for me fraternal affection, or even the regard of long acquaintance, even what his mother's ward might claim from him, I think I should be comparatively happy, and should have no farther wish than to hear sometimes from himself that he was happy too. But to be thrown from him in this unfeeling and unfriendly way, to be forgotten and abandoned as if I had been  
found

found unworthy not only of his affection but of his remembrance—oh! it is too much.”

These reflections, and the uninteresting conversation of the company she was with, to which she was compelled to attend in order to escape the more irksome importunity of Montague Thorold, served but little to raise her spirits. They did not reach Ranelagh till a late hour: but on their entrance, the first party they met was Lady Castlenorth, her daughter, and Lady Molyneux. Captain Cavanaugh was on one side between the two former; and in deep conference with the latter was Captain Thorold.

The ladies, who could not avoid seeing Celestina, passed her with averted and haughty looks. Cavanaugh fixed his eyes on her with a look of bold enquiry, and Captain Thorold, as he passed his brother, said—“Ho! Montague, are you there? I did not know you were in town, my boy!” He then gave a significant nod, as much as

to say—"Aye, aye, I see how you are engaged," and passed on, renewing, with great seeming earnestness his conversation with Lady Molyneux.

Though there was not in the world another set of people whom Celestina could be so little pleased to meet, and though she heard throughout the room, and from every groupe that passed them, the report of Willoughby's marriage, with various comments and circumstances, such as every body thought themselves at liberty to adorn it with, she felt a sort of satisfaction in seeing that he was not with them; and while there was not any thing she really so ardently desired as his happiness, yet so contradictory is the human heart, that she wished to believe he married Miss Fitz-Hayman reluctantly, though a marriage under such circumstances must, above all other things, render him miserable.

Montague Thorold, elated more than ever by hope, and encouraged to persevere by Lady Horatia, having now too, in consequence

sequence of the purchase his father had made for him, more pretensions to aspire to her than his unsettled fortune had before given him ; and sanguinely interpreting her gentle refusals, her friendly admonitions to desist, as giving him all the encouragement she could do, while her fate in regard to Willoughby was not absolutely decided ; was on this evening particularly pressing and earnest ; while her languor and weariness, the encouragement which she was conscious she seemed to have given him, her pity and even her regard for him, with the certainty of his ardent love for her, gave her altogether the air of listening to him favourably ; and while her mind was frequently fixed on Willoughby, and she hardly recollected that Montague Thorold was talking to her, she seemed to be hearing the latter with complacency, and approving of conversation which it was not necessary for her to answer.

At length the short time Lady Horatia meant to pass at Ranelagh was over. She  
was

was fatigued, and Celestina rejoiced to hear her say she should go home. As Montague Thorold and Mr. Howard were with them, the other gentlemen remained with the ladies who intended to stay longer; and Lady Horatia taking the arm of her relation, left Celestina to the care of Montague Thorold; and they were in this order proceeding towards the entrance, when standing near one of the niches, his hat over his eyes, and his head leaning against the wall, they saw themselves close to Willoughby, who was, in that attitude, listening to some very earnest conversation from Vavasour, who stood by him.

The crowd about the entrance was considerable; and Celestina, holding by the arm of Montague Thorold, was so near them, that they both at the same moment saw her. Willoughby started as if he had been crossed by a spectre; and without waiting to look a second time, he pushed through the crowd and disappeared; but Vavasour came up to Celestina, and said  
in

in his usual way, taking abruptly the hand that was at liberty—"You must give *me* leave, Miss De Mornay, to see you to your carriage."

Celestina, dreading to give occasion to any thing like altercation between him and Thorold, answered coldly but civilly, that she thanked him; but Thorold, who had not forgotten or forgiven the mortification she received from him at York and on other occasions, could not now help resenting what seemed to be a repetition of such insulting behaviour. He therefore, walking very hastily on with Celestina, said—"No, Sir, there is no occasion for you to give yourself that trouble; for Miss De Mornay is under my care."

"I did not mean, Sir," replied Vavasour fiercely, "to ask your leave to wait on this lady; and I beg you will not take the liberty to address yourself to me."

"Pray, Mr. Vavasour," said Celestina, trembling, "do not persecute and terrify me with this sort of behaviour." She then  
saw

saw by his countenance, and by the eager way in which he grasped the hand he held, that he was very far from being sober, and her terror encreased.

“ I did not mean to persecute or terrify you,” cried he: “ no, by heaven! But damme if I can with any temper see that fellow always at your ear, and affecting to be favoured. Come, come, leave the pedant to his meditations, and don’t forsake your old friends. The petticoats that he is to wear are his protection.”

“ And this lady’s presence, Sir,” said Thorold, “ is your’s, or be assured I should answer you in a very different way.”

Celestina, now alarmed even to agony by the menacing look of Vavasour, who quitted her hand and stepped before Thorold, screamed out to Mr. Howard and Lady Horatia; but the crowd had so far divided them from her, that neither heard her, and before she could effectually interfere to prevent it, such words had passed between Vavasour and Thorold, as nothing but blood is,

is, by the laws of honour, supposed to atone for. Celestina, who heard them in affright not to be described, now disengaged herself from both of them, and not knowing what she did, only having some confused idea that she might meet Captain Thorold in the room, she ran back thither alone.

Her beauty and her terror, whether it was thought real or affected, gave her, in the opinion of the first groupes she met, the appearance of some young creature desirous to attract attention. Three or four young men surrounded her, and enquired what service they could do her. Breathless and ready to faint, she answered that she was in search of Captain Thorold.

"Egad," cried one of them, "Captain Thorold is a devilish lucky fellow."

"And a very tasteless one," said another, "to leave such a lovely creature to seek for him."

Celestina now understood how entirely they mistook her; and collecting some presence

sence of mind, said—"For heaven's sake, gentlemen, assist me to find him. His brother is engaged in a quarrel: a quarrel, I fear, on my account—and ——"

She would have gone on, but unhappily for her the party of men who surrounded her were all of that description which are called bucks, who fancy they distinguish themselves by shewing how little they deserve the character of men. One or two of these hearing of a quarrel, found they had no disposition to engage where there might be trouble or danger, and therefore walked away; but three others had now time to consider the elegant beauty of Celestina, and to have settled in their own minds that she was a girl without character, which her being alone, and even what she had told them of a quarrel on her account, seemed to authorise: they were therefore all determined not to let her go; and far from thinking of relieving the terror in which they saw her, and which they indeed believed to be a mere piece of acting, two  
of

of them took her arms within theirs, and held with her such discourse as encreased her alarm almost to distraction. She now knew not what she said. Terror for herself had so mingled itself with her fears of what might happen between Vavasour and Thorold, that she sometimes angrily entreated her persecutors to release her, then humbly besought them to see for Captain Thorold, till at length, as they led her again towards the door, her fears were become insupportable, and shrieking, she entreated them rather to kill her than expose her to such horror as she felt. At this moment, however, by a sudden spring, she disengaged herself: Willoughby was returning alone along the passage: she saw him, and threw herself into his arms.

“Save me, save me, Willoughby!” was all she could utter, before, quite overcome with variety of terrors, she became almost senseless; her head resting on his shoulder, and his arms supporting her.

He

He looked sternly on the young men, and demanded the occasion of the lady's alarm. They replied that they knew nothing more than that she had run into the room alone, enquiring for a Captain somebody, and that they had endeavoured to find the cause of her fright, and to assist her. Willoughby, who did not believe this, but who was more solicitous to recover the fainting Celestina than to punish these idle boys, waved with his hand for them to be gone, and they immediately obeyed; for it was the defenceless only they had courage to insult. Willoughby then, by the assistance of a gentleman whom he happened to know, led Celestina, who was just sensible, into the room where the ladies cloaks are received; and while his friend ran to get her a glass of water, Willoughby placed himself by her, and with one hand round her waist, supported her with the other, nor could he forbear, as he gazed on her pale but still lovely countenance, pressing her to that heart which had been so long fondly

fondly devoted to her. In a very short time she drew a deep sigh; and recovering recollection, begged his pardon, in a voice hardly articulate, for the trouble she had given him. She remembered that to the husband, the lover of Miss Fitz-Hayman, it must be trouble, and she withdrew herself from his arms before he could ask her, (so absorbed was he in the mingled sensations of pain and pleasure), what had occasioned the alarm in which he had seen her. With a sigh still deeper than her's, he now made this enquiry. She answered, but not very distinctly, that high words had arisen between Mr. Vavasour and Mr. Montague Thorold, and that not able to check their impetuosity, nor to overtake Lady Horatia and Mr. Howard, who were gone on before, she had foolishly run back into the room to find somebody who might part them, when those young men had surrounded and insulted her, till in her fear she knew not what she did.

“ And

“ And all this terror—all this excessive apprehension, was for Mr. Montague Thorold?” said Willoughby, in a faltering but not a tender voice: then, as if he had discovered nothing but what he had before known enough of to be easy under, he seemed at once to repress all appearance of interest as far as it related to Celestina, and said, with forced coldness,—“ I dare say, Madam, you have nothing to apprehend for his precious life. However, I will seek my friend Vavasour, and take care at least for to-night that it goes no farther; if you will tell me where I can find him, and whether I shall have the honour of conducting you.”

Celestina was heart-struck by the manner in which this was uttered. She turned her expressive eyes on his, to enquire whether he could really behave thus cruelly towards her: his eyes met hers; but as if he could not bear her looks he turned them away towards the door, where his friend now entered with the water, and almost at the  
same

same moment Mr. Howard came in, and told her that Lady Horatia had been in great alarm at her not following her to the coach, where she now waited for her. She did not give him time to finish the sentence, before she eagerly asked if he had seen Mr. Montague Thorold.

“Seen him,” cried Mr. Howard; “no, certainly. Is he not with you?”

Celestina would then have related what had happened; but her returning apprehensions that something fatal might have already been the consequence, and the look with which Willoughby surveyed her, entirely deprived her of the power of speech; and Willoughby himself in a few words, related to Mr. Howard what she had told him. “I do not know,” added he, “what ground Miss de Mornay has had for the alarm she has been in; but I know Vavasour was not sober, and possibly may have been wrong headed: it will therefore be necessary perhaps for me to enquire after him; and, as you, Madam, seem to be now recovered,

covered, and are safe in the protection of Mr. Howard, I will wish you good night." Having hurried over these words, he bowed to Mr. Howard, then, with equal coolness, to Celestina, and disappeared.

A shower of tears, the first she had been able to shed, fell from the eyes of Celestina as she lost sight of him. These tears however, and the water she had drank, a little relieved her; and Mr. Howard again representing the uneasiness in which he had left Lady Horatia, she collected strength enough to avail herself of the assistance he offered her; and leaning on his arm, reached the coach, where she was compelled, however unequal to the recital, to relate to Lady Horatia what had happened within the twenty minutes, (for more had not elapsed) that she had lost sight of her.

Lady Horatia expressed great apprehensions for Montague Thorold; and thought, with great appearance of truth, that unless he had gone immediately away with Vavafour to decide the difference that evening, he

he would have fought them again, and have relieved them from the extreme apprehensions which he must imagine they must be under on his account.—These conjectures, which were but too well founded, and which they had no means of satisfying, kept Lady Horatia and Celestina awake the whole night: towards morning, the former, who was less deeply interested, and more accustomed to the painful events of life than Celestina, found some repose; but Celestina herself was up by break of day, listening to every noise in the street, and trembling every moment lest she should hear of some fatal accident: and her reflections, which no longer offered her any thing to hope, were busy in representing and magnifying all the evils which she had to apprehend.

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CHAPTER V.

THE cruel suspense as to the extraordinary disappearance of Montague Thorold with Vavasour the evening before, lasted till near ten o'clock; when as Lady Horatia and Celestina were sitting at a breakfast-table, where the uneasiness they were both under did not allow them to eat, a servant announced Captain Thorold.—Celestina turned pale as death at the name; but there was no time to express any part of the fear she felt before he entered.

His air was assuming, confident, and what the French call *glorieux*. But from that Celestina could judge nothing; for she knew he had too little regard for his brother to have been much affected at any thing that might have befallen him. He paid his compliments in the common form to Lady Horatia, who  
was

was too much concerned to be able to answer them; and then turning to the silent, trembling Celestina, he said, with an unfeeling smile, "Well, Madam, your young champion is living."

"Good God," cried Celestina, "has he ever then been in danger?" "Yes," replied the Captain, "he has been in all the danger that a man can be who has a brace of pistols fired at him; and is now in as much as is usual to a man who has a ball lodged in his shoulder."

Celestina could not speak; she could with difficulty breathe: but Lady Horatia now eagerly enquired the particulars, and learned, that in consequence of violent language that passed between Vavasour and Montague Thorold, after Celestina left them the preceding evening, a challenge had passed, and a meeting been appointed in Chelsea Fields, at seven o'clock in the morning;—that Thorold, after quitting Vavasour, had in vain endeavoured to find out Lady Horatia and Celestina, and meeting his brother, and relating to him what had happened, was by him dissuaded from attempting it, as he could not

see them without informing them of what had passed, and was yet to happen; that he had therefore gone home with Captain Thorold, who had, at the appointed time, attended him to the field, where Vavasour was with a friend; and where, the preliminaries being soon settled, each fired without effect; but neither declaring themselves satisfied, they fired again, and Montague Thorold received a ball in his shoulder, which was not extracted when his brother left him at his lodgings, whither he was immediately conveyed, and where he was attended by an eminent surgeon. "And is he in danger, Sir," said Celestina, with all that tremulous tenderness in her voice that her extreme sensibility gave her—"Is he in danger? is he in pain?"

Captain Thorold gave her a look which seemed to say "Humph—it *is* true, then, that you are violently in love with this brother of mine:" and then answered—"The surgeon, on whose skill I have great reason to rely, does not seem to think him in danger; but till the ball is extracted, which will be attended with pain enough, it is not, I fancy, easy to speak very positively.—However, Miss de Mornay,



Mornay, Montague wont complain of the pain, let it be as severe as it will, while he recollects that he suffers in your defence, and hears, what I shall not fail to relate, how kindly you are interested for him."

Celestina could not say that this unlucky affair did not originate about her; indeed, she had not at that moment strength to enter on any explanation; nor could she deny, that she was extremely concerned, or make Captain Thorold comprehend that for a stranger, under the same circumstances, she should have been greatly, though not equally sorry:—As to Lady Horatia, who hoped that this accident would operate decisively on behalf of Montague, she rather encouraged than contradicted the idea that his brother seemed to entertain of Celestina's partiality towards him. And now the Captain, with as much unconcern as if nothing had happened, seemed only desirous of displaying his own consequence and his own perfections: as if to convince them both, that for a woman, who had ever seen him and his brother together, to prefer the latter, was an instance of most terrible want of discernment. Several times was Celestina,

who could hardly support herself, on the point of withdrawing; but she thought, that were she to quit the room, it would look still more as if she was sinking under her apprehensions; and she besides feared, that were she absent, the zeal of Lady Horatia would induce her to explain to Captain Thorold more of her wishes and projects in regard to her and his brother than, feeling as she did the impossibility of their ever taking place, ought in discretion or in justice to be talked of.

For these reasons, wretched and distressed as she was, she had yet resolution enough to remain in her place; till at length Captain Thorold, having paraded about himself for near half an hour, withdrew.

Then it was, that, from the conversation of her friend, Celestina understood how much such an event would be expected to affect her sentiments in favour of Montague Thorold; and how impossible Lady Horatia considered it for her, after all the sufferings he must sustain on her account, to delay rewarding those sufferings and his long and ardent attachment to her longer than till his recovery: of which, notwithstanding what Captain Thorold had said

said of the possibility of danger, she seemed not to doubt; though she expressed great concern for the pain he must endure, and great anxiety to be informed of his actual situation. To all that she said, Celestina hardly answered a word—her heart was too much oppressed; and she could say nothing that would not appear either like insensibility, ingratitude, or like the anxious solicitude of love. She wished to avoid either: she wished to be alone; and though the determination Lady Horatia almost immediately formed to visit Montague Thorold herself, was a measure which must strongly confirm all the reports that she wished to discourage, yet it released her to her own reflections, and she was glad at that moment to see her friend depart.

Her own reflections, to which she was now left, were most uneasy—She knew that such an affair must unavoidably be much and immediately talked of: she knew how much it would be misrepresented, and what conclusions would be made upon it. The expression used by Willoughby the evening before still vibrated in her ears: “What! and is all this

terror, all this apprehension, for Montague Thorold?" It was displeasing then to him that she should feel an interest for Montague Thorold—and the little tenderness he had appeared to shew her, was repressed the moment he understood who was the subject of her alarm—conscious that hopeless as she had long been of his affection, and submitting to the necessity of their separation, she had yet never bestowed on another the heart he had resigned, she could not bear to think how much every circumstance had contributed to make him think, that she had lightly given it to the first candidate; nor could her mind dwell without extreme concern, on the pain this affair would give the elder Mr. Thorold, whose hopes were, she well knew, centered in his youngest son, and who would not only be distressed by the sickness and danger to which he had thus exposed himself, but be hurt at his having acted so contrary to those principles he had always endeavoured to inculcate, as to giving or receiving a challenge.—Nor were the sufferings of Montague Thorold himself the least part of her concern: she apprehended he might be long confined in  
great

great pain; he might perhaps lose his arm, or even his life: and while she regretted the rashness which had been the occasion of this hazard, she could not but acknowledge, that it was impossible a young man of spirit could otherwise have answered the unprovoked ferocity of Vavasour.

Of him she thought with terror; and knowing that he was capable of any impropriety in the humour he was now in, she gave immediate orders, that if he came she should be denied.

All the circumstances of the preceding evening, which the fear that had beset her during the latter part of it had for a while driven from her recollection, now returned to it; and the repeated intelligence she had received throughout the day of Willoughby's marriage, all the particulars with which it had been related, the happy looks of Miss Fitz-Hayman, the proud triumph that sat on the features of her mother, and the forced friendship with which Lady Molyneux seemed to have connected herself with persons who were so lately the objects of her aversion, all con-

firmed the reports that were in circulation, so as to put their truth beyond a doubt.

In a few days she was to hear of their actually being married: to listen again to the detail of their nuptial splendor, perhaps to witness them: she was to be surrounded by a thousand impertinent people who would enquire and talk to her about the duel; and, with an heart so oppressed, must attend to them with patience, and answer them with civility. The whole prospect before her was too unpleasant; she fancied it impossible to be endured; and resolved to attempt, though at the hazard of appearing ungrateful, perhaps of disobliging her best and almost her only friend, to solicit leave to go down to Jessy, at least till the public conversation should have been turned to some other topic, and the public curiosity no longer excited by the marriage of Miss Fitz-Hayman, or the 'rencontre of Vavasour and Thorold.

The natural softness of her heart made her, among all these sources of peculiar uneasiness, really and tenderly interested for Montague Thorold: and she waited the return of Lady Horatia with as much solicitude as she could have

have felt if a beloved brother had been in such a situation: perhaps she would have felt more for nobody but Willoughby himself. It was, therefore, a great relief to her harassed spirits, when she heard, that while Captain Thorold had been in Park-street, the bullet had been extracted; that no bone had been injured by it, and that he was in as good a way as could be expected; his surgeon declaring, that from the nature of the wound, and the good constitution of his patient, he thought him in no danger, and should probably, at the end of a fortnight, dismiss him with his arm in a sling.

The satisfaction Celestina expressed on this account, was not however increased, when Lady Horatia added, that far from complaining of his sufferings, he exulted and rejoiced in them; flattering himself that she for whom he could willingly have risked an hundred lives if he had possessed them, would feel some pity for him; and knowing how much power, in such a heart as hers, that sentiment had to produce others still more favourable.

Lady

Lady Horatia then went on to say very seriously to Celestina, that she ought no longer to trifle with such a man, but resolve immediately to give him her hand: not only as the reward of his merit, but to preclude the dangerous pretensions of Vavasour: "to whose perseverance," said she, "no refusal, no repulse seems to put an end."

"Dearest Madam," said Celestina, *did* I ever trifle with Mr. Thorold—surely I never meant it—so far from it, I have an hundred times regretted that your partiality towards him, and the influence you have and ought to have over me, have combined to keep him in an error, which all my candid dealing with him has not had the power to refute. I have told him, whenever he has urged the subject, that he is in possession of my esteem and of my friendship, but that for my love I have it not to bestow."

"But he is content, my dear, with your esteem, with your friendship; and knows that, in such a heart as yours, love will follow his attachment to you; especially as you *now* surely cannot alledge that any other person possesses it."

Celestina

Celestina, too conscious of all these circumstances that ought long since to have induced her to withdraw it from Willoughby, yet equally conscious that she could never feel for another that degree of affection of which she had been sensible for him, was silent a moment or two, and then said, "Dear Lady Horatia, why must I marry at all? while you afford me your protection can I be happier; and should I be unhappy enough to lose it, should I not be more likely to meet content even with my small and humble fortune, if I remained single, than if I gave my hand where I have no power to bestow my heart."

"I am amazed," replied Lady Horatia, "that with such very good sense as you possess, you would accustom yourself to cherish these childish and girlish notions: what is this love, without feeling all the violence of which you suppose it impossible to be happy?"

"Dear Madam," cried Celestina, interrupting her, "have I not heard you say, that you once was sensible of it yourself, and that having been compelled to quit the man of your choice, you considered such a necessity

as

as a heavy affliction, and that it rendered most of the occurrences of your subsequent life indifferent to you?"

"Yes, you have heard me say so—I merely acknowledged a folly, a weakness, which I pretended not to defend in myself, and certainly not to encourage in you.—What has been the life of this man, whom I called, in the romantic simplicity of sixteen, my first love? When my father parted us, and I was compelled by his authority to give my hand to General Howard, he was a younger brother, with very little fortune. In a twelve-month afterwards, the death of his elder brother and an uncle gave him a very large fortune; and he quitted the navy, where he had, for so young a man, highly distinguished himself, and with his profession he seemed to resign his virtues. He married a woman towards whom he professed himself indifferent; and whose only recommendation was a fortune nearly as large as his own. To her he behaved with neglect, which she repaid with scorn and infidelity. They seemed to agree in nothing but mutual extravagance; till at length they parted, and he now lives in  
France

France the greatest part of the year; at other times wanders about the world, to gratify his taste for variety, and fly from those corrosive reflections which must pursue him who has ruined his health and his fortune by debauchery. Can I, when I consider all this, help despising myself for the pain I felt at being separated from such a man; and ought I not rather to rejoice at what once appeared an insupportable misfortune?"

"Ah, Madam," said Celestina, "it is well if by these reflections, you have been enabled to conquer those remains of useless regret which might otherwise have embittered your life: but give me leave to ask, since there is now no danger of renewing them; give me leave to ask whether you sincerely believe that this gentleman, had he married you, would have passed a life as blameable? You have told me that he was passionately attached to you: you now say, that to the lady he married he was indifferent: surely to that may be imputed all his errors.—His mind became unhinged when he lost her to whom it was devoted, and he aggravated himself the cruelty of his destiny. To you  
he

he might have been an excellent husband, because he loved you; but losing the possibility of being happy, he lost the wish to be respectable; and since he could not live with you, cared not with whom or how he lived?"

"There may be some truth," said Lady Horatia, "in your remarks; but to be tolerably easy, Celestina, in this world, you must learn to be more of an Optimist; and to believe, that whatever happens, could not, nor ought not to have been otherwise. Thus the interference of Lady Castlenorth, whatever might have been her motives, has saved you from a marriage that might have been a hideous crime; thus (not to enumerate other instances that must occur to your recollection); the wild brutality of Vavasour, and even the wound of Montague, will all contribute finally to good, and produce that happiness for you with him, which I do not believe you would have found with any other person."

To this doctrine Celestina could not agree. But the fear and fatigue she had within the last twenty-four hours undergone, disqualified her  
for

for any farther discussion of the subject at present, or for the attempt she meant to make to prevail on Lady Horatia to allow her to go down to Jeffy for a few weeks; her eyes were indeed so heavy, her complexion so pale in consequence of her long agitation, that now the immediate fears for Montague Thorold's life were over, Lady Horatia advised her to take some repose; a proposal which she gladly accepted; and in despite of the variety of uneasinesses she still laboured under, exhausted nature obtained for her a few hours respite in sleep: though she was, in her previous contemplations, so far from assenting heartily to the resigned philosophy of Lady Horatia, that she thought with anguish of the fate of Willoughby, who might, she feared, by the same disappointments in the early part of his life, become quite unlike what he once was; and from his cruel neglect of her since he had been in London, she already fancied she saw that this change had begun.

But could she for one moment have seen the real state of that mind whose virtues she believed to be tarnished, she would have found it as worthy as ever of her tenderness, and  
entitled

entitled to all her pity. Tormented by an affection which he could not indulge for one woman, and entangled by a series of perverse events in an engagement with another; embarrassed in his circumstances, and discontented with himself; his whole life passed in a continual tumult of contending passions; and whatever means he took to calm and mitigate them seemed only to irritate his sufferings.— Thus, when he left his own lodgings on the day of his interview with Miss Fitz-Hayman and his meeting Celestina, he went to the hotel where Vavasour usually lived when he was in town; and where it happened that a party of their mutual acquaintance that day dined: this prevented his having any conversation with Vavasour, which, though it might have contributed but little to relieve his vexation as to Montague Thorold, would have eased his heart by unburthening it to his friend; and Vavasour drank so much, that there was afterwards no hopes of his hearing him rationally. With him he was prevailed upon, at a late hour, to go to Ranelagh;— where he saw Celestina again with the very man to whom he had been so repeatedly told  
she

she had engaged herself; and there, though Celestina happened not to see them together, he was compelled to take several turns with Lady Castlenorth, her daughter, and his sister; thus confirming, by his appearance in public with the two former, what it was indeed too late to retract, though he had already most bitterly repented it.

The quarrel between Vavasour and Montague Thorold, of which his suddenly quitting the place where he met Celestina was partly the occasion (for had he staid, he might have prevented it), added to the conviction he now had that Thorold was very soon to be her husband; and increased his vexation, in despite of all that reason could say to counteract the effect of it. That reason repeatedly asked him—if Celestina had really been brought up and acknowledged as his sister, and had with so small a fortune been addressed by Thorold, and herself approved him, whether he could in such a case have made any reasonable objection? He was compelled to answer no! yet his heart revolted against the assent which common sense urged him to give to a marriage which differed in nothing from what would

would then have been the case, but in early prejudice. He never could learn to consider Celestina as related to him by blood; nor did all the pains he had taken to procure the truth convince him of it; though he dared not act as if he wholly disbelieved it. Yet so perverse is an heart under the influence of such a passion as he felt, that while he had relinquished her, and agreed to marry another, lest that relationship should really exist, he detested Thorold for having, as he believed, possessed himself of those affections, which, otherwise than as her brother, he had owned he dared not claim.

When he left Celestina under the care of Mr. Howard at Ranelagh the preceding evening, he had gone, as he promised, in search of Vavasour; but not finding him any where about the room, or in the avenues to the Rotunda, he had gone to his lodgings, and waited there till near four in the morning.— He then left orders with his servant to send for him the moment his master came; but Vavasour, instead of returning to his lodgings at all that evening, slept somewhere else; and only called there in a hackney coach at half

half past five o'clock to take his pistols; and his servant being ordered to attend him, with the surgeon, there was no possibility of his man giving Willoughby notice; and of course he could do nothing to stop a rencontre of which he did not hear till after it was over.

Vavasour, who then came to him, was not sober: and Willoughby saw, with more concern than surprise, that the habits his friend had acquired since his last absence, were becoming inveterate, and were ruining alike his constitution, his fortune, and his understanding. Though he himself detested Montague Thorold, and cursed the hour when he had put Celestina under the protection of his father, and by that means thrown him in her way; he was too generous, even to an enemy, not to feel that Vavasour had behaved with unwarrantable brutality; and notwithstanding his long friendship for him, he felt too, that had he been as successful as he believed Thorold to be, all that friendship would have been cancelled.

He was vexed, however, at the conversation which this foolish business must occasion;  
and

and in which he knew the name of Celestina must be joined with that of Montague Thorold: and when Vavasour spoke with some triumph of his having chastised the young pedant, Willoughby, with a peevishness very unusual with him, said, he heartily wished he had let it alone.

From the little conversation he had with Lady Castlenorth the evening before, he found she expected him to wait on them the next day. Reluctantly, and with an aching heart, he had then given a sort of promise, and with still more regret he recollected it. The sun now never rose for him but to bring him a renewal of misery; and his dejection never left him, but to give place to paroxysms of passion and fits of fruitless despair.

As the hour approached when he knew he was expected at the house of his uncle, his unwillingness to go increased. Farnham, who now anxiously watched all his looks, saw a deeper gloom come upon him: he saw him take out several letters, read them, replace them, then snatch up a pen, write a line or two, and hurry a-cross the room as if undecided what to do. At length he wrote  
a few

a few lines, sealed the note, and put it in his pocket. Farnham had heard a great deal of the duel that had happened the evening before, and knew it was about Miss de Mornay, and that a gentleman had been wounded dangerously. He had heard the conversation between his master and Vavasour, and supposed, from their manner, that they parted in anger. This circumstance put it in his head, which was rather an honest than a clear one, that some other affair of honour, in which his master was concerned, was still in agitation; and he so thoroughly persuaded himself of this, that he determined to observe narrowly every thing that happened, and to take all possible precautions against his master's having such an accident befall him as had happened to Mr. Montague Thorold.

For this purpose he attached himself very closely to the hole in the door between the dining room and the bed-chamber; and when he was summoned by a furious ring, to attend him, he was under the necessity of first slipping softly down stairs, and then running up to ask his commands.

Willoughby

Willoughby gave him two notes, and asked if the groom was within. On hearing he was not: "Then go yourself," said he, "with these two notes: no answer is required to either: return as soon as you can."—Farnham promising to be expeditious, left him; and reading the directions, found one to be, to Miss de Mornay, the other to Mr. Vavasour. This, with all he knew of his master's former attachment and embarrassing doubts about Celestina, and all that had happened that evening before, and that morning, convinced him beyond a doubt, that another duel would happen, which he imagined it to be his peculiar duty to prevent.—He was not very fertile in expedients; but it occurred to him that the best way would be to carry both these letters, and at the same time communicate his fears, to Sir Philip and Lady Molyneux.

Sir Philip was not at home; but Lady Molyneux, on hearing he wanted to speak to her, ordered him up.

He opened his business with great gravity; detailed all the cause he had for apprehension  
from

from his master's behaviour, and produced the two notes.

Lady Molyneux affected to agree with him as to the justice of his fears, and to commend his prudence and fidelity; she then told him she thought it would be the best way to open the letters, which, as she happened to have a seal with the Willoughby arms, the same as her brother's, she could easily re-seal; and send, if they contained nothing of what they suspected; and if they did, that it would be proper to destroy them.

Poor Farnham, trembling as he spoke, assented to all this, only entreating her to take care that his master might never know it. This she readily promised; and, taking all the blame upon herself, bade him retire while she opened the letters, and come up again when she rang.

She then read them.—That to Vavasour was merely to put off an appointment for the evening, which Willoughby found himself unable to attend — That to Celestina ran thus :

“ I should have sent to you, Madam, immediately on my arrival in London : but ill-

ness for some days prevented my being able even to write, and in that interval I heard that you were on the point of putting yourself into the protection of one who might deem such an address improper, and render it needless.

“ That you have come to this resolution without consulting any of those who were once honoured with your friendship I can now no longer doubt. I, however, feel it in some measure incumbent upon me to offer you every service in my power; to say, that as soon as my own affairs are settled, I shall have the honour of troubling you on pecuniary matters; and if, in the mean time, you have any wish to see me as your friend, I will obey your summons: but leave it wholly to yourself.—I shall consider your silence as an acknowledgment that such an interview will be painful to you; and submit to offer, at a distance, those sincere wishes for your happiness, which must ever be felt by,

Dear Madam,

Your obedient, and most humble servant,

GEORGE WILLOUGHBY.

Bond Street,  
May 17th, 1789.

This

This letter, cold and unlike his former style to Celestina as it was, his sister immediately resolved to suppress. Her hatred to Celestina was increased to a degree of inveterate malignity of which it was difficult to conceive her haughty *indolence* was capable; and this arose chiefly from her admiration she every where saw her beauty excited, which was a point in which she could not bear to be excelled. Convinced as she internally was, that Celestina was an orphan stranger, brought upon her mother's charity, she chose rather to leave the report of their relationship uncontradicted, than to see her united to her brother, and put on a footing with herself, to which that equivocal relationship could give her no claim: and since her suppression of her letter to Willoughby, which an interview now would explain, she was doubly solicitous to prevent it—Her pride could not bear that her brother should become the humble and reduced country gentleman that he must submit to be if he married a woman without fortune; and her avarice represented the possibility of his being, in such a case, a burthen on his affluent rela-

tions. All these considerations determined her to stifle it, and the sentence with which the letter concluded, assured her she might do it with impunity. She therefore called up Farnham, on whose simplicity it was very easy to impose, and told him that the letter to Mr. Vavasour was very immaterial, and that he might carry that; but that the other, to Miss de Mornay, was of a nature to involve his master in great difficulties, and that therefore she would destroy it. She then put it in the fire; and bade him carry the other, which she had carefully re-sealed. This Farnham immediately did; but being unwilling to be guilty of a greater falsehood than there seemed to be occasion for, he actually went to Park-street that he might tell his master he had been there.

On his return, Willoughby questioned him who he saw at Lady Horatia's.—For this question the poor fellow was not prepared.—However he answered—“ I saw John, Sir, my Lady's own footman.”

“ Well—and was Miss de Mornay at home ?”

“ No,

“ No, Sir,” replied Farnham, who had now acquired courage; “ but you know you bade me not wait for an answer.”

“ Well, but had you not the sense to ask where she was ?”

“ No, Sir; to be sure I did not think of that: but, however, I fancy she was visiting, Sir, the wounded gentleman in Oxford-street.”

Willoughby knew that Montague Thorold lodged there, and that it must be him alone who was described as the wounded gentleman.

“ And why do you think so, Sir,” said he, fiercely, as if poor Farnham had been accessory to it—“ and what the devil have you to do to think about it ?”

“ Lord, Sir,” cried Farnham, “ only because as I came along I saw my lady’s coach at the door where I knew young Mr. Thorold lodges, and just nodded to Sam, who was upon the box.”

“ Cursed fool !” exclaimed Willoughby—“ could you not have asked whether she was there or no: yet why should I desire to know ;” added he, rising and walking about with his hands clenched together—“ what is it to me ?

and why do I torment myself?—Go, Sir, and fetch my powdering gown and my things to dress.” Poor Farnham, convinced that Lady Molyneux was right in what she had done, yet rendered doubly timid by the consciousness of having committed a sort of fraud on his master, hastily obeyed.

## CHAPTER VI.

THE situation of Celestina was rendered infinitely more uneasy to her by the transactions of the last two or three days; and her spirits could no longer support her—The certainty of meeting Willoughby wherever she went, and of meeting him only to be more and more convinced that he had ceased to feel any degree of affection for her, made the thoughts of continuing her present mode of life, which had any charms in her opinion, quite insupportable to her. The conversation about the duel—the questions she should be asked, and the impertinence she must attend to, increased the aversion with which she thought of appearing again in public; and she determined, at any hazard, to propose to Lady Horatia, that she might go into the

country, and there wait, wherever she pleased, till she should herself quit London.

She took, therefore, the first moment they were alone together, to prefer and urge this request: and after making some objections, which, however, the altered looks and depressed spirits of Celestina very forcibly combated, Lady Horatia consented to her going; but as the house of Jeffy was too near Alvestone, where it was supposed Willoughby and his bride were immediately to go after their marriage—it was settled that she should, with a maid to attend her, go to Cheltenham, and wait there till Lady Horatia could leave London, which she proposed doing in a fortnight or three weeks at farthest. This plan being once arranged, Celestina was impatient till it was executed; and so effectually set about the little preparations she had to make, that the next day she left London—and for the first time since her quitting the Hebrides, enjoyed the calm solitude she loved.

Wretched in the mean time was the state of Willoughby; he went to dine at Lord Castle-north's as he had been obliged to promise—where a large company were assembled, as if

to receive him for the first time, as the heir and acknowledged son-in-law of Lord Castlenorth. He had, however, no power to conceal under the common forms of life, the misery of his internal feelings; his countenance refused to wear the forced smile of complaisance; his emotion when the duel was talked of, and the name of Celestina was introduced, was evident enough to all but those who did not chuse to see it.

Lord Castlenorth was, indeed, never very much celebrated for discernment; but his Lady highly piqued herself on her sagacity—on the facility with which she read characters, and penetrated the views of those with whom she conversed—her blindness therefore was evidently wilful—and that of her daughter, unless her love or her vanity intercepted her right, was equally strange—certain it was, that they either could not, or would not, attend to the reluctant melancholy of Willoughby, under which he with difficulty concealed the bitter agonies of despair; and they appeared perfectly satisfied with him and with themselves.

There was one face, however, in the circle,

that, though it wore looks of festivity, yet was now and then seen to survey Willoughby with indignant scorn; and then, as if checked for indulging it, to resume the smile of approbation and complacency. Captain Cavanaugh indeed did not very frequently address himself to him; but conversed chiefly with the Ladies. But whenever he did speak to him, Willoughby himself, who had till now very little noticed him, could not help remarking that there was something peculiar in his manner.

When the Gentlemen were left together, Lord Castlenorth, who could not drink, and whose health obliged him to retire early, called to his nephew, and bade him take his place. This Willoughby, who had been all day meditating how he might make an early escape, was compelled to do, though he observed, "that as Captain Cavanaugh usually took that seat when his Lordship retired, he wished him then to assume it."—Lord Castlenorth, however, persisted; and Willoughby, willing to get rid of an irksome task as soon as possible, made the wine circulate so quickly, that, as he was never in habits of drinking, he

he soon began to find himself forgetting his dejection in a kind of bewildering stupor: any thing seemed better to him than the task of entertaining Miss Fitz-Hayman for the rest of the evening; and as he felt he by degrees ceased to think of her, he found some satisfaction in drinking, and was very soon completely intoxicated.

He was no longer capable of judging for himself, or he would not have gone up stairs in such a situation—he had just recollection enough left to stay, without committing any great extravagance, while tea was served; and then gladly followed a servant who whispered to him that Lord Castlenorth desired the favour of seeing him in his own apartment.

Thither he staggered with very little consciousness; and being seated where his uncle sat opposite to him, in a great chair, while several parchments lay open on a table, he heard, but without the least comprehension of what was said, a long harrangue—on fortune and family, heraldry and genealogy, titles and successions;—the whole of which concluded, by his informing him that the money was ready to pay off all the incumbrances on  
his

his estate, which was to be immediately done; that the settlements were in hand, and to be finished in a week; and that, that day fortnight was fixed for the marriage. Willoughby, between the verbose confusion of his uncle's mode of delivery, and his own incapacity of attention, heard it all, but understood nothing; he was not, however, so unconscious of pain and sickness. Mrs. Calder, who for the greater part of this conversation had sat reading a treatise on bilious concretions, on the opposite side of the room, with her spectacles on, now finding Lord Castlenorth had done, and that Willoughby looked very likely to sink out of his chair, very wisely ended this conversation, by sending up Farnham to his master, who had him conveyed home in a chair.

The next morning he was awakened to a perfect recollection of all that had passed the evening before; and became too certain, that the means he had taken to obtain a temporary release from his fetters, had served only to rivet them more closely. Alas! he remembered too—with poignant anguish remembered, that so many hours had elapsed since he  
had

had written to Celestina; and that it was now too certain she would not answer his letter, and wholly declined seeing him.

Though he had so often determined never to meet her again; so often persuaded himself not to wish it; this cruel conviction of her total estrangement from him, seemed to fall as heavily as if he had never dreamed of their separation—she might, however, be out of town; she might be engaged; something might have prevented her writing. To this slender hope he clung for some hours of the morning; but it insensibly became fainter as his impatience increased, and at length he ordered Farnham to find the coachman of Lady Horatia, with whom he was acquainted, and try to discover any particulars he could.

Farnham, dreading lest his master should discover the imposition he had ventured to practise, dared not disobey him—he sat out therefore for the stables, where, at that time in the morning, he was sure of finding his acquaintance; he found him indeed very busy in cleaning, with the aid of a postillion and a helper, two of his horses, which had been, “poor things!” he said, “the first stage to Cheltenham,

ham, with Miss de Mornay and Rebecca the maid, that my Lady sent with her."—Farnham made him repeat this intelligence; to which he added, "Why, my Lady and all of us be going down to Gloucestershire, in about a fortnight; that is, as soon as young Mr. Thorold is well enough to be removed, which, the Doctor as tends him says, will be in that time or less. My Lady takes his illness sadly to heart, and so does Miss—and went out of town sadly down in the mouth; but, howsoever, 'tis well 'twas no worse, you know; and as he is like to do well—why there's no great harm—and Miss will be married all one."

The minutest article of this account was remembered by Farnham, and punctually related by him to his master—who now thoroughly convinced that all hope was at an end of Celestina's retaining for him any affection; and a certainty so dreadful; the assurance of his being irrevocably engaged, and having gone into Gloucestershire, there to wait the recovery of Montague Thorold; the assurance that he should never see her more—all contributed, with his excess of the evening before,

fore, to inflame his blood—and by four o'clock he was in an high fever.

His indisposition was increased by a visit from Vavasour, who laughed at the vexation and disgust he expressed at what had happened in regard to Montague Thorold; but grew graver when he heard that, far from its having put an end to his pretensions to Celestina, it had served only to hasten their marriage.—The wild and ill-founded projects of Vavasour to prevent this, and to succeed himself, which to Willoughby would have been equally hateful, were but little calculated to appease his agitation, and quiet his spirits; before Vavasour went away, he became delirious—and Farnham, in a terrible fright, went for Lady Molyneux and a physician—Lady Molyneux was just stepping into her coach, when the affrighted face of Farnham appeared before her—she chid him for the needless alarm he had given her; and said, that she supposed it was nothing but a little return of the fever her brother was subject to—"I cannot," said she, "call now; but as I come home this evening, I will see him."—The physician, for whom Farnham then went, directly

directly attended; and found his patient, though not in so high a fever as he had seen him before, ill enough to require his immediate assistance—which he ordered with so happy an effect, that in a few hours the delirium entirely subsided, and Willoughby, though extremely languid, was at night almost free from his fever.—Lady Molyneux who called on him, soon after midnight, for a few moments, again blamed Farnham for his officious apprehensions, and being well convinced that Willoughby would be glad of any excuse to keep back the preparations which were now going on, she endeavoured to persuade him that his illness was very trifling; and taking occasion to talk over what happened at Ranelagh, told her brother, laughingly,—that she hoped he was now convinced of the attachment between young Thorold and Miss de Mornay—adding, “his brother, Captain Thorold, who is really an elegant and fashionable man, tells me they are to be married the moment Montague is able to leave London.”

“Well, well,” cried Willoughby, peevishly—“I know it; and I do not desire to hear any more about it.—I thank you for calling  
on

on me; but it is very late, and my physician desires I will keep myself quiet."

Lady Molyneux then withdrew, and poor Willoughby, to whom she had administered a poison instead of a cordial, tried to find that repose which he so greatly wanted: but to him his estranged, his lost Celestina, on one hand, and on the other his intended bride, seemed to cry—"sleep no more."

Farnham, who sat up by him to administer the medicines he was to take, heard him sigh the greatest part of the night without ceasing; and whenever he thought he might venture, asked him how he did.—"Pr'ythee, Farnham," said he, after two or three of these questions, "do not ask me how I do—how should a man do, who is in a situation to envy every body but the felon just going to be hanged—you know, that I am at this moment the most miserable fellow upon earth."

"I am sure I am very sorry to hear it," answered his servant: but if I might be so bold as to speak, I should say that I cannot think what cause you can have to be miserable—nor . . . . ."

He was going on, when Willoughby, eagerly  
ly

ly catching aside the curtain, said, "What cause! —Have I not lost an angel—and am I not, have I not condemned myself to marry—a woman I cannot love—no, never; never, by Heaven."

"To be sure, Sir," said Farnham, "to be crossed in love, as I may say, is very bad—as I have heard tell—but in this here matter—all things considered, I hope your honour's mind will be settled about it; and as for the two ladies, to be sure beauty is all fancy—Miss Celestina, for certain, is a fine young lady, and so good and gentle to servants, that it was always a pleasure to me to hear her speak to me, and to wait upon her; but then, for certain, Miss Fitz-Hayman, though she is higher and more stately, as she ought to be, being as she is a lady of title and quality—is a fine young lady too, and a very majestic grand person—and then her great riches——

"Curse on her riches," exclaimed Willoughby.

—"Aye, Sir;" said Farnham, who was not a little flattered by his confidence, and was now got into one of his profling humours—"Aye Sir, it is very well for young gentlemen to cry curse on this, and that, and t'other—but as for riches—what can they do without them?

Nobody.

Nobody is not respected the least in the world, if they don't make a shew, and a figure, and the like of that—and can it be done without money?—No—nor not without a pretty deal on't—and, for my part, I own—I don't love to see *my* master not able to vie with the best Lord of the land—as to be sure he ought."

"Thou art a fool, Farnham," cried Willoughby—"Do have done with thy Lords of the land, and give me twenty drops more of the opiate"—"Yes, Sir," said Farnham; and prepared to obey him—but while he was counting out the drops, he could not forbear going on—"One, two—there are other people, Sir,—three, four—about my Lord's house, who, it's my notion—five, six, seven—are not so apt to cry, curse money—eight, nine, ten—there is Captain Cavanaugh—eleven, twelve, thirteen, fourteen"—"Captain Cavanaugh," interrupts Willoughby—"What of Captain Cavanaugh?" "Nay, Sir, —only the Captain—as far as I can find—do'nt hate money, nor cry, curse it and damn it—he has been long enough living about the world, to know that nothing can be had without it, and—that is all, Sir."

"But

“ But that seems to me not to be all, Sir—pray, tell me what Captain Cavanaugh has to do with what we were talking of—with Miss Fitz-Hayman?”

“ Lord, nothing, Sir, I am sure, that I know of—only, if the young Lady was not engaged, and in love with you, perhaps—the Captain, Sir, is reckoned, by the women, a very handsome man, Sir—and Miss Fitz-Hayman may think so, as well as another.” “ Why he is married—you booby—what stuff have you got into your head; and who has been talking to you of him and Miss Fitz-Hayman; let him be reckoned as handsome as he will by the woman—he can be nothing to Miss Fitz-Hayman—for I know he has been married some years.”

“ Aye, Sir, I dare say that may be—but there is such a thing as being un-married again;—not that I ever heard, I am sure, much about the Captain; only Justina was laughing one day, and saying, in her broken English—so that I can’t say I quite right understand her—that if my Lord should die, and the Captain should ever be able to get rid of his wife—she should not be much surpris’d if he and  
my

my Lady was to make a match of it; for that never was such a favourite as the Captain."

"I should not be much surprised at that myself," answered Willoughby, "for I believe the Captain *has* a good deal of interest there—so, then, he has been trying to get rid of his wife?"

"Justina told me, Sir, one day, as a great secret, that my Lord had helped him to money, to try at it.—But, Sir, if Justina should know I ever mentioned it, I should never be able to get a word out of her again." "I promise thee, she never shall—so tell me, Farnham, all thou hast heard from her about Lady Castle-north and the Captain."

"Why, Sir, it was not much—but only Justina was laughing t'other day about my Lady's having such a great friendship for him, and there's no stopping her tongue when she begins—so she told me—Lord, Sir! a great many things that were odd enough to be sure—but only Ladies of quality, I reckon, don't much care what people says of them.—She said, that my Lady knew well enough, that my Lord could not hold it long—and that she was providing herself with a handsome young

young husband, and making sure of him, as she thought, before the old one hobbled off—but let her take care, said Justina, that she marries her daughter first, or I know what will happen—The Captain knows well enough, that a young woman is better than an old one; and besides, that such a great fortune as my young lady will have, is better, twenty to one, than her mother's jointure."

This speech at once opened Willoughby's eyes, as to Lady Castlenorth's motives for the extreme haste and earnestness she had shewn to conclude her daughter's marriage; feeling as he did, in regard to Miss Fitz-Hayman, he was sensible neither of jealousy or mortification at the idea of any preference she might entertain for Cavanaugh; but a hope, that, from this circumstance, something might happen to break off the connection for ever between him and his cousin involuntarily arose in his mind.—In any event, it ought to be attended to; he bade Farnham therefore go the next day, and see if he could set Justina gossiping again—"I have a notion, Farnham," said he, "that you are very much in the good graces of the little Neapolitan."

"Oh,

"Oh, no, Sir; finer fellows than I am have all the chance there—and for my part, Sir, I don't much fancy her, though she is lively and smart, and when I get her by herself will tell the secrets of all the family."

"Which thou lovest to hear; therefore get her by herself as soon as thou canst, and make her tell thee all she knows."

Willoughby then again tried to compose himself—and by the help of the medicines he had taken, obtained four or five hours sleep.—He was a great deal better in the morning; as he breakfasted, a note was brought him from Lady Castlenorth informing him that his uncle had been seized in the night with a violent return of that asthmatic complaint which so frequently had rendered his stay in England impossible: that the spring, though far advanced, was so cold and wet, that there was no chance of his being better while he remained there now; and that therefore he had, by the advice of his physicians, and by his own inclination, determined to set out that very day for the continent. She added, "You will come to us, of course, instantly, and if you cannot go with us, settle when you will follow us;

us; but your uncle wishes you to accompany us."

This intelligence was to Willoughby like a reprieve from what to him was worse than death; since the longer he considered of his marriage, the more dishonourable now, and the more certainly miserable hereafter, it appeared to him. He wrote an hasty note, saying how ill he had been the whole night, and how impossible he feared it would be for him to see his uncle that day; but that, if his physician, whom he every moment expected, gave him leave to go out, he would certainly wait upon him.

This answer had not been dispatched above an hour, and his medical friend had just left him, with a strict injunction not to stir out that day, when Lady Castlenorth and Mrs. Calder entered his room.

"So, my dear Sir," cried the former—"what is to be done! Lord Castlenorth will be wretched to leave you behind—and my poor girl too!—What is this sudden fever—you really look ill—I cannot imagine what is to be done—For my Lord to stay, he thinks it death."

Willoughby

Willoughby muttered something which he meant should express concern at his uncle's illness; but Mrs. Calder fortunately precluded the necessity of his being very distinct in his hypocrisy, by stepping up to him, and taking his hand, "Come, come," said she, "let me feel your pulse." She then gravely, counting its vibrations, as she held her stop-watch, said, "Why, really now, here is much less fever than I expected from your appearance—let us see your tongue.—Humph—'tis white to be sure—Where are your medicines—I should think if you were well wrapped up and put into a chair, you might go to your uncle without any danger—on such an emergency, you know a little may be hazarded."

"No," said Lady Castlenorth, "by no means; nothing must be hazarded—And after all, my Lord may make himself easy, as I dare say you will be able to overtake us before we get to Paris; where, if my Lord is better, and finds that relief he generally does from a change of air, we will stop till you join us: I think you will be perfectly restored in a week: but, however, I will go myself to Dr. B——, and hear what he says."

"Oh, I can tell you," interrupted Mrs. Calder, "that he'll be well, perfectly well, in less than a week.—I have been tasting his medicines, and understand clearly from them what Dr. B—— thinks of his fever—It was a mere ephemeris—of that be assured. . . ."

"Well," said Lady Castlenorth, "my dear Willoughby, what shall we say?"

Willoughby was ready to answer—"Nothing more, good Madam:" but sighing from a sense of pain and restraint, he only replied, "that he could only say that he was very sorry for his uncle's illness—and—"

"That you will hasten after us?—that, I think, I may venture to assure your uncle.—He was settling this morning that you should be married in the English ambassador's chapel at Paris; and I really don't see myself that, upon the whole, these unlucky illnesses of my Lord's and of your's need impede the affair a single hour; all the difference will be, that you will be married at Paris, instead of at London, and we will pass the rest of the year in Italy instead of at Castlenorth."

"But the dear young Lady," cried Mrs. Calder,

Calder, "our sweet and lovely child, how will she bear even this transient separation!"

"Indeed, I don't know," said Lady Castlenorth, affecting to be quite sympathetic—"but she shall come, and bring the letter my Lord will have directed to be written with his last directions about the deeds and carriages; which our dear George must bring with him: and" added she, smiling, "I fancy, upon the footing they are now, there will be no great indecorum in her coming to his lodgings."

Willoughby found immediately his fever returning, and that he should have a terrible head-ach: he put up his hand to his temples—"I am obliged to your Ladyship," said he in a languid voice; "and I wish this most oppressive head-ach of mine would——"

"What it aches now, does it?" said Mrs. Calder, "I wish Dr. B—— was here, I am sure I could give him a hint or two on this case which might be of use to him."

"Let us go to him," interrupted Lady Castlenorth, "and talk to him about this ugly fever; and when we have found him, it will be time to return to my Lord, and to send

my daughter hither; for we think to sleep at Rochester to-night."

Willoughby now blessing her for her haste, made his compliments in a low voice; and still complaining of his head—the Ladies departed.

They were no sooner gone, than he tried to discover by what means he might best avoid receiving the favour of the visit Lady Castlenorth had promised him from her daughter. He was ashamed of the part he was acting, however ill and reluctantly he performed it. For the first time in his life his conduct was contrary to his sense of honour, and, he was conscious, altogether unworthy of him; and while he had thus betrayed himself, he was become the dupe of Lady Castlenorth, and perhaps was meant to be the dupe of Miss Fitz-Hayman and their mutual favourite.—His pride, as well as his rectitude, revolted from the idea of carrying on this odious farce, which he now wondered what demon had tempted him, in the moment of passion and despair, to begin—and which he, however late, thought he should now act more honourably in ending at once, than in suffering

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it to proceed another day—He was, however, by no means able to determine, how he should do this; and what he had most immediately to consider was, how he should escape the enquiry and adieu of the heiress, which he might now every moment expect.

He at length determined to go to bed—and sending again for his physician, who was very much his friend, acknowledge the truth to him, and get an absolute prohibition against his seeing any body—He told Farnham, therefore, that he again felt himself extremely ill; and bade him immediately run for Dr. B——. Fortunately he met him in the next street; and in less than ten minutes he had received Willoughby's confession, that all his illness, both before and since his return from abroad, had been owing to distress of mind, which he could now no longer hope would abate, by the necessity he had thought of putting himself under to conceal it—In short, he owned that his dislike to Miss Fitz-Hayman, as a wife, was unconquerable; and that as he was determined at all events to break the treaty off, however far it had gone, and therefore entreated his friend to find some rea-

son for his evading an interview so useless and so irksome, when it was impossible for him to continue acting a moment longer the part he had so rashly undertaken, and yet did not mean, and especially in the present condition of his uncle's health, abruptly and rudely to end it; but to soften, at least to him, a disappointment which he had thus rendered doubly heavy.

Dr. B—— entered at once into his meaning, —and, smiling, said, “It is a little unusual, my friend, for me to contrive an illness to separate a lady from her lover, though I have been often asked to make pretences for bringing them together.—However, the fact is, that you really are unfit to entertain the lady, for your fever is considerably increased since I saw you in the morning; and we see very plainly that any agitation is hazardous while you continue in this irritable state:—I will therefore wait here and see Miss Fitz-Hayman myself; and so contrive as to bring you off this time, and for the future you must manage it yourself.”

“I am sure you despise me, Doctor,”—cried Willoughby, “for the part I have acted in this cursed affair.”

“No,”

"No," answered he, "not exactly so—But I own I think you wrong, inasmuch as any kind of dissimulation is unworthy of you; and above all, that which goes to rob a young woman of her heart under false pretences."

"But I hope I have not done that—for upon my honour, I should never forgive myself, if I had."

It looks very like it, though, my friend, from your own account of the matter—And if it is so——

"You think I ought, at all events, to marry her?"

"Indeed I do."

"Alas, my dear Sir," said Willoughby, "it is surely better for me—even more honourable, to decline her hand now, than to accept it and make her miserable."

"I don't believe you could make any woman miserable," answered Dr. B——, "because you have good nature, honour, and generosity—but, my dear Sir, I did not mean to play the casuist in such an affair—and here—if I am not mistaken, is the lady herself at the door."

"Dear Doctor," cried Willoughby, "have

the goodness to go down directly." He immediately obeyed—and returning in a few moments, said, "Well, I have sent away the disconsolate fair one—broken hearted—for fear of losing her love."

"Don't rally me, my friend,"—answered Willoughby,—“But tell me, did my cousin appear very much concerned?”

“She endeavoured at least to appear so.”

“Do you think, then, it was merely endeavour?”

“Would you not be mortified, now, if I said it seemed so to me?”

“No, upon my honour—I might perhaps be mortified to find that I was believed to be an easy subject of imposition—but for the rest—nothing would be a greater relief to me, than to be well assured that the partiality my cousin shewed for me was either never real, or, having been so, exists no longer.”

“I don't know her enough,” replied Dr. B——, “nor have I been long enough talking to her now to be a very good judge.—The honestest of them, my friend, are not easily understood—and I am much mistaken if your fair relation comes under that description.—

tion.—I mean, when I say honestest—the most candid—the most sincere.”

“ Well! but what do you judge, from her behaviour, just now, are Miss Fitz-Hayman’s sentiments towards me?”

“ She would have me believe, I think, that they are those of great attachment and trembling apprehension for your health—But somehow, it was, I fancied, a sort of concern that had more stage effect for its object, than real concern ever thinks about—and I do believe, that if you *do* prove a perjured swain after all, the heiress of Castlenorth will not add to the sorrowful catalogue of damsels who have died for love.”

Willoughby, glad to hear this, now readily promised a ready acquiescence with his friend’s orders, which were to keep his mind as quiet as he could, and to see nobody till he had quite conquered his remaining indisposition; and the Doctor then took his leave.

In less than two hours, a large packet came to him from Lord Castlenorth—which Willoughby sent word down to the man who brought it, that he was then too ill to open—On Farnham’s delivering this message, the

servant said, that no answer then was required, for that his lord and lady, their daughter, Mrs. Calder, and Captain Cavanaugh, had all departed, with the servants who were immediately about them, the very moment he came away, and were then, in two post coaches and four, on their way to Rochester.

Willoughby felt for a moment as much relieved by this intelligence, as if half his troubles had been removed by their departure.— Too soon, however, this temporary respite ended, by his recollecting how much he must yet encounter before he could feel himself free; and that whatever freedom he might regain, Celestina would be another's.

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## CHAPTER VII.

**I**N the mean time Celestina was alone at Cheltenham, indulging that regret which arose from the certain loss of Willoughby's friendship, and the assurance that she should see him no more.—Every day she expected to see in the newspapers, or to hear from Lady Horatia, that he was married—and though she tried to reason herself into a calm acquiescence with what was unavoidable, she never opened a paper or a letter without trembling.

But her own unhappiness prevented her not from feeling for the unhappiness of her friends. The letter she had received from Emily Cathcart had made a great impression upon her—though she knew not how it would be proper to act to answer the views of the writer.—At length

length she determined to write to Mrs. Elphinstone, and enclose the letter itself—and this she did a few days after she was settled at Cheltenham.

Almost every post brought her accounts of the amendment of Montague Thorold, from Lady Horatia, who visited him constantly—and in almost every letter she expressed, either plainly or by implication, her expectations that Celestina would attend to the wishes of all her friends, and give him her hand immediately on his recovery.—This repeated importunity from a person to whose wishes, and for whose opinion she felt so much deference to be due, was infinitely painful to her; but how to escape from it she knew not.—If she quitted Lady Horatia she had no proper protection—no home to receive her—and though her little income had hitherto more than sufficed to support her while with such a friend, and though she had received about an hundred pounds from Cathcart, paid her by the directions of Willoughby while he was abroad, which yet remained almost untouched, yet on such a sum, and on the interest of fifteen hundred pounds, she

she could not, with any degree of prudence, adopt the plan on which her imagination had lately dwelt with peculiar pleasure—that of setting out alone, or with only a female servant, and travelling through France. She fancied that there she might be enabled, though she had yet no clue to guide her, to find some traces of her family.—An invincible inclination, which she sometimes took for the inspiration of heaven, had been for some weeks gaining on her imagination—and every thing seemed to encourage it; but reason and prudence, both of which were perhaps decidedly in favour of her accepting the proper establishment offered her, by a man who had not only given so many proofs of his sincere and tender affection for her, but who was the son of one of her best friends, and avowedly recommended to her by another—a man too whom she preferred to every other person except Willoughby, and whom she would have chosen had Willoughby never been in question.

For her it was very certain that he was in question no longer; he was in fact dead to her—and no probability remained of his ever  
feeling

feeling for her even the regret that the loss of an agreeable acquaintance might have given him.—But still her heart and her imagination had been so long accustomed to consider him as their first object, that she found it impossible for her to transfer to another the same attachment; and without being sensible of love she could not promise it—she desired nothing but to be permitted to live single; and be mistress of her time and herself—and not to be importuned to undertake duties which her heart told her she could not conscientiously fulfil.

But she foresaw too evidently, that while she remained in her present situation, and Lady Horatia continued so eager for the match, her life must pass in a continual conflict between her wish to gratify her friend, and her disinclination to marriage. At her time of life, professions of a resolution to remain single were merely laughed at, and never believed; and Montague Thorold had never hitherto considered her gentle refusals and friendly admonitions to desist, but as being in reality as much encouragement as she could give him, while her situation in regard  
to

to Willoughby remained so awkwardly undecided—that while he might renounce the name of lover, he might still assume that of a near relation, and have the power of controuling or at least of directing her.

Now that it was decided, beyond a doubt, that he neither meant to avail himself of either the one or the other, she saw that she had nothing to urge in support of her refusal which would be listened to; and while her mind dwelt on all the friendly but still irksome controversy in which she must of necessity be engaged when Lady Horatia and Thorold came down, it of course adverted to the means of relief, which could, she thought, be obtained only by her quitting England—and for her doing so, her natural desire to discover her parents was, she thought, a sufficient excuse.

In her present solitude she found so much to soothe and console her, that she longed for nothing so much as the power of enjoying it, and at the same time wandering through various countries, and particularly through that which she had been taught to consider as her own. The longer she thought of this plan, the more  
agree-

agreeable it became to her imagination; and she passed many hours every day in reading travels through France, Italy, and Switzerland, still humouring this visionary idea till it had acquired the force of a *presentiment*; a persuasion that could she go to the South of France she should find her family.

Of this she continually thought: of this she continually dreamed; and though one great motive that would have urged her to attempt it, the possibility of being restored to Willoughby was at an end, she still determined to execute this plan before the summer elapsed.

She had indeed nothing but her gratitude and attachment to Lady Horatia to detain her in England—she could not go to Jessy, because it was so near Alvestone; nor enjoy the friendly and instructive conversation of Mr. Thorold, because of the unfortunate partiality of his son.—The sole remaining friend of her childhood, Lady Molyneux, was not merely estranged from her, but had invariably treated her with negligence, scorn, and contempt.—To England therefore she had at least no friends who attached her—the whole world was her country; and with that restlessness

to

to which the unhappy are subject, she fancied that in any part of it she should find more satisfaction than in her present situation.

By her wandering continually alone in the pleasant country that surrounded the town where she resided, at a season too when the face of nature was every day growing more lovely, her talent for poetry, which sometimes remained for whole months unexercised, was again called forth; but whatever were the objects really before her, whatever were presented to her mind by books, Willoughby was ever the principal figure in the landscape.—If she sat on the green hill, as she often did for hours together, lost in mournful yet not unpleasing reverie, it was only to recollect scenes that were passed; which the same sounds she had then heard, the simple sheep-bell, the early song of birds; the same scenes of fresh turf and wild flowers, brought again most forcibly to her recollection.

If in her reading, she was by the traveller's lively description of the countries he had passed through, to fancy herself there, she reverted instantly to the delight she should have felt

felt could she in a progress through such romantic scenes have been the companion of Willoughby; and it was in this disposition of mind, that after perusing an account of a cottage and its inhabitants overwhelmed by the fall of an avalanche, a great body of snow from the mountain above, she composed the following little lyric poem.

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THE PEASANT OF THE ALPS.

WHERE cliffs arise by Winter crown'd,  
And through dark groves of pine around,  
Down the deep chasms, the snow-fed torrents foam,  
With'n some hollow, shelter'd from the storms,  
The PEASANT of the ALPS his cottage forms,  
And builds his humble, happy home.

Unenvied is the rich domain,  
That far beneath him on the plain,  
Waves its wide harvests and its olive groves,  
More dear to him his hut, with plantain thatch'd,  
Where long his unambitious heart attach'd,  
Finds all he wishes, all he loves.

There

There dwells the mistress of his heart,  
And *love*, who teaches every art,  
Has bid him dress the spot with fondest care ;  
When borrowing from the vale its fertile soil,  
He climbs the precipice with patient toil,  
To plant her favorite flow'rets there.

With native shrubs, an hardy race,  
There the green myrtle finds a place,  
And roses there, the dewy leaves decline ;  
While from the craggs abrupt and tangled steep,  
With bloom and fruit the Alpine berry peeps,  
And blushing, mingles with the vine.

His garden's simple produce stored,  
Prepar'd for him by hands adored,  
Is all the little luxury he knows ;  
And by the same dear hands are softly spread,  
The Chamois' velvet spoil that forms the bed,  
Where in her arms he finds repose.

But absent from the calm abode,  
Dark thunder gathers round his road,  
Wild raves the wind, the arrowy lightnings flash,  
Returning quick the murmuring rocks among,  
His faint heart trembling as he winds along ;  
Alarm'd !——he listens to the crash

Of rifted ice !——Oh, man of woe !  
O'er his dear cot—a mass of snow,  
By the storm sever'd from the cliff above,  
Has fallen——and buried in its marble breast,  
All that for him—lost wretch—the world possest,  
His home, his happiness, his love !

Aghast

Aghast the heart-struck mourner stands,  
Glaz'd are his eyes—convuls'd his hands,  
O'erwhelming anguish checks his labouring breath;  
Crush'd by despair's intolerable weight,  
Frantic he seeks the mountain's giddiest height,  
And headlong seeks relief in death.

A fate too similar is mine,  
But I—in lingering pain repine,  
And still my lost felicity deplore;  
Cold, cold to me is that dear breast become,  
Where this poor heart had fondly fix'd its home,  
And love and happiness are mine no more.

While Celestina was thus, with more tenderness than discretion, cherishing the memory of the friend she had lost, Willoughby was very differently occupied from what her imagination suggested.—Instead of being the gay and fortunate lover, on the eve of marrying one of the greatest heiresses in England, he was suffering in his personal health, from the anxiety of a mind at war with itself—and certain of nothing but that for him the world no longer contained any happiness.—The intelligence, however vague, and like the common gossiping stories so usual among servants, that he had received from Farnham, had made  
a great

a great impression, which what he afterwards gathered from the same quarter had increased. Justina had told Farnham, as a secret however of the first importance, that Captain Cavanaugh had been of late in the habit of being admitted to her young lady's dressing room after Lady Castlenorth and the family were retired, however late the hour might be—that her young lady was obliged to entrust her with these visits, that they might be more securely concealed from the rest of the family; but that sometimes she had been dismissed to bed, and sometimes ordered to wait till he retired.—That on some of those occasions she observed her young lady had been crying, by the redness of her eyes; and that then the Captain had always left her with the air of a man much offended.—That she had sometimes heard them talk in voices as if they were arguing upon something, but could never distinctly understand what their conversation was about.—“They were in sad fright always,” said Justina, “That Miladi hear them.—Miladi knows not at all what goes on in this house.”—“And my lady, I suppose,” said

said Farnham, "would be in a horrible passion if she heard of it?" "Oh, for me", replied she, , "I could not stay if she did find it out."—"But why," enquired Farnham, "why, if your young lady likes the Captain so as to have him keep company with her in this manner, what does she mean by marrying my master?" Justina then, with an arch look, answered, "Oh, my good friend, the Captain has one wife already; and why should not my young lady have one husband?—The Captain will be her *Cecisbeo*—cavalier servante."—"I don't understand your French out-of-the-way names," replied Farnham; "but I am sure, that if your lady marries my master only to play such pranks as some other fine ladies do, she will get into a bad scrape—for he is not a man to be quiet when such sort of doings are a-going on, that I can tell her—and if she don't love him better than any other man, I think she had much better say so."—"Oh, silly man,"—answered Justina—"as if my young lady could not have a regard for both of them!"—"Aye, aye," replied Farnham, "that may do well enough in your country—but it will never do here."—

Justina

Justina now, afraid that Farnham's zeal for his master would perhaps urge him to reveal the dangerous secret with which she had thus entrusted him, began to soften the harshest features of it; by saying, that she believed there was no harm at all in the friendship between her young lady and Captain Cavanaugh—that to be sure, the Captain was a sweet handsome man, and very agreeable—and therefore her young lady liked to talk with him, which she never could do when her mother was by; as she never suffered him to speak hardly to any body else—and that it was natural enough for her lady to like the Captain, and have a regard for him, because she had known him so long.—She ended her conversation with exacting from Farnham a promise that he would never mention a syllable to any body of what she had told him; a promise which he kept, however, only till he could reveal it all to his master.

Willoughby had, after receiving this information, no longer a doubt as to breaking off instantly his proposed alliance; but how, without plunging a dagger in the heart of his  
uncle,

uncle, to do this, required some consideration.—Lord Castlenorth had sent him full directions as to paying off all the incumbrances upon his estate, and deposited the money at a banker's, where he had also left a large sum for his own use; and expecting him to join the family at Paris, if he did not overtake them sooner; and was now pleasing himself with the idea, that in a very few days the favourite project of his life would be completed; and that in adopting the son of his sister, and uniting him with his daughter, he should transmit his name and his honours to posterity with little variation from lineal descent—It was this hope, that seemed to have sustained his feeble existence to its present period, in spite of the numerous infirmities he laboured under, and even of the prescriptions and nursing of Mrs. Calder—And though it was impossible for Willoughby either to love or esteem such a man as Lord Castlenorth, yet he felt for him some regard, as his mother's brother, and some pity not only for his real but his imaginary sufferings, which he knew must be dreadfully increased, and perhaps

haps become fatal, from so heavy a disappointment of all his expectations.

He hesitated, then, how to act; whether to write or go to him—or whether he should not rather address himself to Lady Castlenorth or her daughter; and for two days after their departure, had been unable to resolve on any thing, when a porter, who immediately disappeared, gave to the servant of the house a letter for him.—It was evidently written in a foreign hand, and in a foreign idiom—though pains seemed to have been taken to disguise both——The contents were these:

“ SIR,

“ One who is and will always be a stranger to you, takes the liberty to approach you with this advice so important to you—and fearing it may be soon too late——

“ You are, Sir, on the point of being married, as the report goes, to the daughter of Lord Castlenorth, Miss Fitz-Hayman, your relation—I have cause to know that her heart is belonging to another person, and only chagrin and inquietude will be the effect, if you execute this marriage, whatever may have

seemed to the contrary.—If there is any doubt of the truth of this, a little observation, or making enquiry among those near her, will explain what I would say: and if there is question of the person she has a great friendship for, you have only to think of those who are always with her. A word they say to the wife is enough for them to understand—I have the honour to be,

“ With profound respect,

“ Sir,

“ Your devoted servant,

“ Unknown.”

Willoughby had no sooner read this letter, than it struck him that it was written either by Cavanaugh himself, or by some person employed by him—and his motive evidently was to prevent a marriage he now saw so nearly concluded, and which would destroy all his hopes of securing to himself this opulent heiress—rather than her mother, whose lavish fondness for him had enabled him—by some means or other—it was probable they were not very justifiable means, to release himself

himself from his former engagements—engagements which, with far other views, she had assisted him to dissolve.

Many concurring circumstances strengthened the persuasion that this letter was fabricated, if not written, by Cavanaugh.—It seemed to be the translation of a letter first written in French, and Willoughby had heard that Cavanaugh could not write English with facility from long disuse.—It was certainly Cavanaugh's interest, by any means, to stop the marriage between him and Miss Fitz-Hayman, which perhaps no means could have done more effectually; since from the tears she had frequently been observed by Justina to shed in their long conferences, it was probable his arguments had failed of their effect.

If Willoughby had before felt something like antipathy towards Miss Fitz-Hayman, which he never could wholly conquer, he now found it amounting to abhorrence and detestation.—The love she had shewn towards him must either have been the effect of art or of vice—and both were to him equally odious. That she could hope to impose upon him by

the one, or think him a proper object for the indulgence of the other, were ideas equally hateful and equally humiliating; and under the first impulse of indignation, he was tempted to write to her, and, inclosing the letter from his anonymous correspondent, add to it all the circumstances Farnham had learned of Justina, as reasons why he renounced her with contempt.

But after a little reflection, his manly and generous spirit inspired him with far other designs.—It was possible, that his cousin, whom he now considered with as much dislike, but with more compassion, might yet be saved from the artifices of a villain—and he thought himself bound to attempt it by every exertion, except the sacrifice of himself in marriage. It was possible that his uncle, though he could not make that sacrifice to gratify him, might yet be in some degree preserved from the dreadful shock which his daughter's conduct must give him, were it described to him in the horrid light he himself now saw it in; or revealed to him by any one less cautious than himself. Distressing, therefore, as the scenes must be that he should  
have

have to go through, when instead of joining the family, to complete his marriage, he should meet them with those charges which put an end to it for ever; he determined to follow them immediately; and writing to Cathcart such instructions as were most requisite, as to the management of his affairs, and without hinting how different the purpose of his journey was from what it was supposed to be, he departed as soon as his physician dismissed him, for the Continent; which was in something more than a week after the Castlenorths had left London.

Every body concluded that he was gone to his bride,; and every body's conjectures remained uncontradicted—Lady Horatia, in her letters to Celestina, told her, that Lord Castlenorth's illness having obliged him to quit England, on a very short notice, Willoughby and Miss Fitz-Hayman had been privately warned the day before they set out; that some business, as to his estates, detained him afterwards five or six days in London; but that he was now gone to the Castlenorth family at Paris, and was to proceed with them to pass the summer in Italy. The same account found its way into the

public prints, and was received without any doubt.—Celestina shed many tears over the first information she received, and then accusing herself of folly, tried to dry them, and to detach her mind from thinking of Willoughby—but this no effort enabled her to do; and though all anxiety was now lost in the most painful certainty, she sunk from fruitless solicitude into hopeless dejection.

In such a frame of mind Lady Horatia found her—when after a separation of about three weeks, she rejoined her at Cheltenham. With her arrived Montague Thorold, quite recovered of his wound, deriving from it, and from his thus being allowed to attend Celestina, more hope than ever; while his love seemed to have increased, if to increase were possible; and while his sufferings and his merit certainly rendered him interesting to Celestina, and combined to entitle him to her friendship, her pity, and esteem; she felt, and felt with regret, that, decided as she believed her fate now to be in regard to Willoughby—friendship, esteem, and pity, were yet all she could give to Montague Thorold.

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CHAPTER VIII.

**W**ILLOUGHBY, with every sensation that could render such a journey unpleasant, proceeded to Paris, where he learned that his uncle impatiently waited for him;—had he gone immediately to him, he must have crush'd at once, all the expectations his appearance raised: and the shock must have been too great and too cruel. He determined at first, therefore, to write to Lady Castlenorth—yet after some reflection, doubted whether it would not be better to give the letter he had received to Miss Fitz-Hayman; and leave it to her to find the means of dismissing him, without his being compelled to assign the true reason. It was still possible that the charges against her might be unfounded or exaggerated.

It was possible, that were they neither, he might rescue her from the abyss to which she seemed to be devoting herself.—But, from the pride and violence of her temper, and from that imperious spirit, which had never yet borne to be told of an error, he not only felt great uneasiness from the idea of the scene that was before him, but doubted whether the person for whose sake he was willing to encounter it, would not baffle all his endeavours to rescue her from evil, or conceal her errors by clamour and resentment.

After some deliberation, however, as it was necessary to fix on something, he wrote a short note to Miss Fitz-Hayman, desiring she would favour him with a few moment's conversation; and entreating her, for reasons he would then explain to her, not to inform Lord or Lady Castlenorth of his arrival at Paris, till after he had seen her.

This note he sent by Farnham to Justina, to be delivered to her mistress; and received in a short time an answer, that she should be alone that evening at ten o'clock, and that Justina should conduct him to her, in her own dressing room.

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He found her sitting alone; and, under the appearance of receiving him with pleasure, there was, he thought, a lurking apprehension of the occasion of this mysterious visit.—He felt himself extremely distressed how to open such a conversation; but the consciousness of rectitude, and some degree of indignant resentment, immediately restored that calmness and resolution, which on his first entrance he feared he might fail of commanding.

He began by apologizing for the liberty he had taken in thus soliciting an interview with her, before he saw the other parts of the family. “But, I am persuaded, Madam,” continued he, advancing towards her, with the letter open in his hand, “that whatever foundation there may be for the assertion which this letter contains, it will be less uneasy to you to read it yourself—than to have any appeal made on it to Lord and Lady Castlenorth”—She took the letter with an air of mingled astonishment and indignation; but Willoughby saw it tremble in her hand—“a letter, Sir, in which mention is made of me!—I am really quite at a loss to know what there can be in it, that I should, in your  
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opinion, wish to have it concealed"—“ It is not long, Madam,” said Willoughby, fixing his eyes on her face; “ and if you will have the goodness to read it”—“ Oh, certainly, Sir”—She ran her eyes over it, and as he attentively watched her countenance, he saw pride struggling to conquer fear and shame, and with some degree of success; for having read it, she paused a moment, and then assuming an air of haughty resentment, she threw the letter on the table that was between her and Willoughby—and said, contemptuously, “ I know not whether most to despise the Author of such a letter, or the man who—if indeed he is not included in both descriptions—can poorly make it a pretence for insulting a person, who has already been too much his victim.”—“ Pardon me, Madam,” said Willoughby, “ for interrupting you; but I must take leave to say, that I am included in neither—a moment’s reflection will convince you that I am incapable of the latter; and had the former been my object, I should not have chosen this method of shewing this extraordinary billet to you; nor thus put it in your power to detect the author, without any hazard

zard to yourself of having his charges believed. Miss Fitz-Hayman, I will be very ingenuous with you :—the person here alluded to, is Captain Cavanaugh—I know it : I know that the partiality, whether real or affected, with which you have appeared to favour me, has been superseded by his more eminent merit ; and, though I am very willing to relinquish all prospect of an honour of which I am unworthy—I cannot feel much satisfaction, in reflecting on the idea you seemed to have entertained of my facility or blindness ;—nor, indeed, can I, without regret, see you likely to——”

“ Say, rather, Sir,” interrupted Miss Fitz-Hayman—“ Say, rather, that you rejoice in having found, or made, an excuse to break through the promises you have given—from which, however, Sir, you would have been released without degrading yourself by this poor and unmanly artifice.—The daughter of Lord Castlenorth need not, surely, solicit the hand of any man.” Pride and anger now choaked her utterance ; and Willoughby, taking advantage of her want of words, again seized the opportunity to speak ; he took her hand, which

which she would have snatched from him, but he continued to detain it, while in the gentlest accents of friendly remonstrance, he said, "Come, come, my dear cousin—if I am not your lover—at least, I can never be your enemy.—For Heaven's sake be not your own; confide in me, and believe that I will rather take the blame and inconvenience of our separation on myself than suffer you to incur either with your father—you cannot suppose, I trust you do not even wish, I should proceed farther in forming the alliance that brought me hither, knowing what I know."

"And what do you know, Sir; and from whom have you obtained this knowledge?"

"From sources, which render it impossible that I should be mistaken—Captain Cavanaugh."

He was proceeding; but, either from the tone in which he spoke or some other circumstance which at that moment struck her, she was suddenly impressed with a fear that he had been calling Cavanaugh himself to an account; who, as it happened, had not that day dined with them.—This idea threw her instantly off her guard—she turned pale, and asked in an

an altered and tremulous tone—"what he meant by these sources of information?"

Willoughby saw immediately what she believed; and the truth of the information he had received from Justina was evident beyond a doubt. Her fears for her own reputation, or of the anger of her father, she could conquer; but the moment she apprehended that the life of Cavanaugh either had been, or might be hazarded, her fortitude failed her. It was now the moment to pursue the truth, which Willoughby, by soothing her, while he kept the idea of her lover's danger in view, at length with great difficulty, obtained, by her half indignant, half contrite avowal—that Cavanaugh had been a too successful candidate for her heart—and that her father and her mother's eager wishes, together with some other motives, which Willoughby discerned, through the confusion and agitation with which she attempted to palliate or conceal them, had prompted her to affect for him a passion she had not felt since she had been in the habits of listening to Cavanaugh.

Willoughby looked back with terror to the danger he had escaped—and with infinite pity, mingled

mingled with less gentle emotions, cast his eyes again on his cousin; he found her so deeply entangled by the art of Cavanaugh, that to save her from him, was no longer in his power; but it was possible perhaps to take upon himself the anger and indignation of Lord and Lady Castlenorth, and give her time to arrange her own plans, by immediately withdrawing in silence; though, how any comfortable arrangement could be made for her, with a man who was understood to be already married, he knew not; nor how Lady Castlenorth would bear so cruel a blow, as the preference thus given to her daughter by a man whom she certainly had intended as successor to her present husband, whenever his infirmities should release her. When the first tumult of those passions, which fear, shame, and love, had excited in the bosom of Miss Fitz-Hayman, subsided, by the kind and considerate arguments of Willoughby, she became able to talk with some degree of calmness on the subject; and he found that from the last renewal of their acquaintance with Captain Cavanaugh, this design had been certainly entertained by Lady Castlenorth; but that, on

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his part, no other advantage had been taken of her extreme partiality towards him, than to obtain, by her means, money to enable him to prosecute a divorce from his wife—a young woman whom he had married some years before for the sake of some fortune, and a great deal of beauty, which she then possessed.—Having in two or three years dissipated the former, he left her to make what advantage she could of the latter; and had never troubled himself about her since, till his reception in the family of Lord Castle-north opened to him prospects of carrying off the rich heiress—and made him desirous of obtaining a dissolution of his marriage, for which his wife's ill conduct, though entirely owing to his desertion of her, gave him a very good pretence. Much of this Willoughby learned from various little circumstances which escaped Miss Fitz-Hayman in this long conversation; for her representation of him was, that of the most amiable and unfortunate of men; married early in life to a woman insensible of his merit; and now rendered unhappy by a passion for another object, whom he had long seen on the point of  
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being given to a rival, who saw her with very different eyes.

Willoughby could not, without astonishment, observe the blind infatuation of a woman, possessed of rather a good understanding: but he found that the art of Cavanaugh, to the success of which his very handsome figure had undoubtedly contributed, had so completely attained the government of Miss Fitz-Hayman's mind, that she no longer saw but with his eyes; and that while, to prevent any suspicion on the part of her mother, she had been suffered to affect a degree of affection for Willoughby, which had long since ceased—Cavanaugh trusted to his reluctance to delay a marriage, which it was easy to see he dreaded; and hoped that the divorce would be obtained before that reluctance would be conquered—he found, however, that Willoughby suddenly agreed to hasten it; and then it was that, in his conference with her, after the rest of the family were in bed, he urged her to find delays; and to procrastinate, herself, a period, to the arrival of which Willoughby no longer seemed averse.—Her tears, and the alarm in which Justina had observed her, were the effects of

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of the earnestness and impetuosity with which Cavanaugh now pressed the necessity of her doing this; and the alternative he sometimes offered her, of declaring to Willoughby himself, the footing upon which he was with her.—Her father's illness, fortunately for her, intervened; and now Cavanaugh was every hour in hopes that he should be set free from his matrimonial engagements—and possess himself of the prize so long the object of his ambition, and the end of all his designs.

Miss Fitz-Hayman and Willoughby now were to discuss the means by which, with the least prejudice to her, their intended union could then be broken off.—The lady, though she did not ingenuously own it, had many reasons for accepting, unconditionally, her cousin's generous offer, to take the whole burthen of their displeasure upon himself.—She knew, not only the extravagant and furious passions which any suspicion of its real cause would excite in her mother, but she was aware of the increasing fondness of her father for his nephew; and apprehended, that if he appeared the injured and forsaken person, that fondness might urge him to make  
him

him amends, by giving him a part of the great sums and estates that were in his own power—and this, rich as she would still have been, she had not any disposition to promote.

After some debate, then, in what way Willoughby should excuse himself, and his rejection (on account of their falsehood) of some method which Miss Fitz-Hayman proposed; he at length determined to write to Lady Castlenorth, stating simply, that he had changed his mind, and found it impossible to fulfil his engagements: and leave it to her to break it to her Lord as she thought proper; for he imagined any letter from himself might be a still severer shock, unless he could assign better reasons than any it was possible for him to offer.

This point being settled, Miss Fitz-Hayman retired to recover herself from the effects of the scene she had passed through; and to study her part in those that were to come.—Willoughby returned, unseen by all but Justina, to his hotel; where he composed a short note to the purport they had agreed upon: and early the next morning he set out on horse-

horseback for Lyons, from whence he intended to proceed, along the coast of the Mediterranean, to the Pyrenees, and to pass some weeks among those mountains which he had never yet seen.

The recent and extraordinary events that had befallen him, gave his mind sufficient subject for contemplation, during the first part of his journey.—It was now very certain that he was for ever released, and that by means which left him nothing to reproach himself with, from his engagement with Miss Fitz-Hayman, and of course from that promise to his mother, in consequence of which those engagements were made.—One great objection, then, to his union with Celestina was thus removed; and never did her image more tenderly occupy his thoughts than at this moment: but, alas! it was no longer cherished with delight. The mystery that clouded her birth, and which he despaired of ever removing, empoisoned the pleasure with which he would have thought of her; and with yet greater bitterness, he adverted to the probability there was that she was now the wife of another.

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Very certain that he should now never find that happiness of which her loss had deprived him, the lesser evils—evils from which, a few years before, he would have shrunk with dismay, seemed to have lost their effect.—It was almost impossible for him, without injustice to others and uneasiness to himself, to keep such a place as Alvestone, in the present shattered state of his fortune; and resolving to disembarass himself from the necessity of returning to England, for some years, he wrote from Lyons, to Cathcart, giving him directions to put the estate to sale: and at the same time informed the banker, in whose hands Lord Castlenorth had left money for the discharge of all his incumbrances, that he should not avail himself of it; but that it must be replaced to his uncle's account.

Having thus loosened almost every tie that connected him with England, from which he did not wish even to hear, lest the information of Celestina's marriage should reach him,

“The World was all before him where to chuse;”

and

and his utmost hope was, to obtain, by change of place, so much tranquillity of mind, as to allow him to feel some satisfaction in the variety of the scenes it offered.

He journeyed from Lyons to Avignon; and then proceeded along the coast, by Beziers and Mirepoix, into Roussillon: interested by the grandeur and beauty of these remains of Roman antiquity which he saw in his way; still more charmed by the sublime views, which, in this romantic line of country, every where offered themselves to his sight; and hearing, and *but* hearing, at a distance, the tumults, with which a noble struggle for freedom at this time (the summer of 1789) agitated the capital, and many of the great towns of France, till, among the wild and stupendous scenes which he at length reached, even this faint murmur died away.

In one of the cottages scattered at the foot of Montlouis, he found a young mountaineer, acquainted with all the passes of the Pyrenees: he was there only for a few days, on his way back from Perpignan to his home, in the Vallée de Luron, and on Willoughby proposing

posing it to him, he most willingly undertook to be his guide through the mountains.

Willoughby had left his horses at Perpignan, and his present equipage consisted only of Farnham, carrying a light portmanteau, and a sort of havresac for provisions, which he took himself, strapped over his shoulders.

On the morning of his departure from the foot of Montlouis, he travelled towards the south-east, always ascending, and was soon in the very heart of the Pyrenees. In scenes which had hardly ever been traversed but by the shepherds and goat-herds, and where no vestiges of man were seen, but here and there a solitary cabin, serving them for shelter, during a few weeks of summer, built of the rough branches of pine or chesnut, covered with turf, and lined with moss.—In these huts, which were now some of them inhabited, Willoughby found a wild, but simple and benevolent people; always ready to supply him with such food as their flocks, among those desert regions, afforded to themselves; and in one of them, on a temporary bed, made of the skins of their sheep, whom accident had destroyed, after a deep sigh, which

was

was drawn from him by the memory of Celestina, and with which every day concluded, he obtained a few hours of refreshing sleep, and with the dawn of the next day pursued his journey towards the summit of the mountain.

Amid these paths that wound among the almost perpendicular points of the cliffs, he often sat down; surveying with awe and admiration the stupendous works of the Divine Architect, before whose simplest creation, the laboured productions of the most intelligent of his creatures sink into insignificance.— Huge masses of grey marble, or a dark granite, frowned above his head; whose crevices, here and there, afforded a scanty subsistence to the lichen and moss campion; while the desolate barrenness of other parts, added to that threatening aspect with which they seemed to hang over the wandering traveller, and to bid him to fear, left even the light steps of the Izard (the Chamois of the Pyrenees), or the wild goats, who now and then appeared suspended amid the craggy fissures, should disunite them from the mountain itself,

self, and bury him beneath their thundering ruins.

Dashing down amongst these immense piles of stone, the cataracts, formed by the melting of the snows, and the ice of the Glaciers, in the bosom of the mountains, fell roaring into dark and abyfs-like chafms, whither the eye feared to follow them—yet, frequently, amidst the wildest horrors of these great objects, was seen some little green recess, shaded by immense pines, cedars, or mountain-ash; and the short turf beneath them appeared spangled with the Soldinella and fringed \* pink, or blushing with the scented wreaths of the Daphne Cneorum—while through the cracks and hollows of the surrounding wall of rock, were filtered small and clear streams, that crept away among the tufts of juniper, rosemary, and the Rhododendron of the Alps†, that clothed the less abrupt declivity; where, uninterrupted by intervening crags, the mountain shelving gradually to its base, opened a

\* *Dianthus superbus*.

† *Rhododendron Alpina*; dwarf rosebay. This p'ant supplies firing to the shepherds of the Pyrenees.

bosom

bosom more smiling and fertile; through which the collected waters, no longer foaming from their fall, found their way towards the Mediterranean sea; their banks feathered with woods of cork trees, chesnuts, and evergreen oaks; and the eye, carried beyond them, was lost in the wide and luxuriant plains of Languedoc.

Never did such a spot offer itself to the eyes of Willoughby, but the figure of Celestina was instantly present to his imagination—he saw her sitting by him, enjoying the beautiful and romantic scenery; he heard her, in those accents which had long such power to enchant him, expatiate on its charms, with all that exquisite taste and feeling he knew her possessed of; and remembered a charming description given by Rousseau, in his *Julie*, of a spot of this sort among the rocks of Meillerie.—“ Il sembloit què ce lieu désert, dût être l’asyle de deux amants; échappés seuls au bouleversement de la nature\*.”

\* It seemed that this desert spot was designed as an asylum for two lovers, who had escaped the general wreck of nature.

For a moment or two he indulged such a delicious reverie, till the sudden recollection of the truth cruelly destroyed it.—Celestina was not, never could be his—never could share with him the simple and sublime delight offered by the superb spectacle of nature—“with all her great works about her.” Whether he was among the rude mountains that she has raised as a barrier, to divide two powerful nations; or gratified with the more mild beauties of his native country, never could she share in his satisfaction, or heighten his enjoyment—but her hours and her talents were all destined to make the happiness of Montague Thorold.—At that idea he started up, and hardly conscious of the rugged precipices beneath him, renewed his wandering researches; and sought, by activity of body, to chase the fearful phantoms of lost happiness that haunted his mind.

He had now passed three weeks among the Pyrenees; had traversed several Glaciers, and descended on the Spanish side, and looked over part of Catalonia.—Again he took his way to their summits; again crossed deep  
vallis

vallies of ice, and wandered over regions where winter reigns in all its rigour, though under a sky of the deepest blue, illuminated by the ardent sun of July; a sky so clear, that not even a fleeting summer cloud, for a moment, diversifies its radiance.—One of the tallest of these stupendous points is, Le pic du midi de Bagnieres, which seems to be the sovereign of the inferior points around it:—from its tall head he descended to Bagniers; and there meaning to close his researches, he rested some days, and then, by another route, returned towards the country of Rouffillon, from whence he had first begun his journey.

But when he arrived there, he had nothing to do but to form some scheme of farther progress; and therefore, pleased as he was with the variety and novelty offered him by this long chain of immense mountains, he determined to lengthen his stay amongst them.—His guide, who had by this time acquired an affection for him, delighted to carry him to every place that he thought might offer either novelty or amusement—and he now conversed with the smuggler, who conveyed, at the extremest peril, prohibited articles of commerce

between France and Spain; now joined the solitary hunter of the Izard, or smaller Chamois; and now shared the more dangerous toils of those who fought the bear, the wild boar, or the wolf, among the deep woods that clothed the sides of the mountains.

It was in an excursion with an hunter of the Izards, that, Farnham having been left behind at the cabin of a shepherd where Willoughby intended to pass the night, he and Gaston, his guide, were, by an accident, separated; and he found himself alone—on one of the most savage spots of the whole chain—above him arose a point covered by eternal snow; beyond which a Glacier spread its desolate and frozen surface for some miles, surrounded every way by sharp and barren rocks: on one side, fed by this magazine of ice and snow, a broad and thundering torrent threw itself; falling, with deafening noise, into a rocky cauldron, so far below that the eye could not fathom it.—A dark, and apparently inaccessible wood of firs was on the other side, where no tree or plant could find its abode, that was not equally able to endure these verity of those cold winds, that, passing over these immense magazines of ice,

ice, carry with them frost and desolation, even into the rich vineyards and luxuriant pastures of Gascony and Languedoc, and there assume the name of the Bize-wind.

Willoughby had lingered so long among these mountains, that it was now the second week of August.—The evenings were, of course, somewhat shortening; and the sun was visible only by reflection from the snowy point above him, when he found himself lost on a place where he knew not his way to any human habitation, or was likely to hear the sound of a human voice.—Little accustomed, however, to fear of any kind, he sat himself down on a piece of broken rock, to consider if, by any of those remarks which Gaston had taught him to make, he could find his way before night-fall to rejoin his servant and his guide, or to find at least some place of shelter.

These observations, however, were impeded by the clouds that seemed to arise from the extensive plains below him, and to gather round the base of the mountains.—They increased every moment, and at length surrounded him like waves; so that he no longer distinguished the objects beneath him, while

immense volumes of white vapour were poured like a sea between him and the neighbouring precipices.—He heard louder than ever, but he no longer saw, the torrent that threw itself down within a few yards of him; and had apprehension ever been, under any circumstances, troublesome to him, he now might well have feared that, lost in this chaos of mist, he should at least remain all night where he was, and perhaps never regain his companions at all.

Life, however, had so few charms for him at this moment, that his indifference for it, added to his natural courage, when only himself was in question, made him perfectly calm and collected—though the thick clouds of mist continued to gather and darken round the spot where he was now compelled to remain.

For a few moments the sighing of the wind which bore this floating vapour, the increased hollow murmurs of the rushing waters of the cataract, were interrupted only by the screaming vulture, and the deep hoarse raven, who seemed by their cries, as they sailed above the grey abyss of mist, to be warning their companions

panions of some approaching danger : thunder was in fact gathered in the bosom of these clouds, and Willoughby, as he sat on his solitary rock, heard it muttering at his feet ; and after some tremendous bursts, which appeared to shake the mountains to their foundations, accompanied by blue and vivid lightning, a violent wind arose, and dispersing the foggy clouds, drove them, with the storm generated in their bosom, to the country beneath.

The last rays of the departed sun were now reflected from the summits of snow, the air became perfectly serene, and Willoughby saw distinctly every object around him. He observed, at some distance to the left, a cross, in an elevated situation, but far below the extremest point of the cliffs ; and he recollected, that the day before Gaston had shewn him that cross, and had told him that near it was the residence of a shepherd ; and not far from it a convent, near the foot of the mountain.—Towards this, therefore, he now endeavoured to find his way ; and by the help of a stick, with an iron fixed at the end of it,

and by his own activity, he at length passed difficulties that to many people would have seemed insurmountable; and, attended only by a terrier which had followed him from England, and which had been the faithful companion of all his wanderings, he reached the pointed rock where the cross was erected.

It was now, however, so late, that he began to despair of finding the hut which Gaston had told him was situated something lower down. The moon, indeed, was rising in majestic beauty behind him; but her light, he feared, would hardly be sufficient to guide him among the woods and crags with which he was surrounded, to an object, perhaps, entirely concealed within them, and with which he was wholly unacquainted.—He sat down, however, till she should afford him more benefit, and to consider what he should do—when, amidst the silence of the night, the sound of a human voice, in slow cadence, accompanied by some musical instrument, was borne on the faint breeze that arose from the low-lands.—He listened—it was not the illusion of fancy, as he had for a moment

ment supposed; and he involuntarily exclaimed—

“ O, it came o’er mine ear, like the sweet south,  
“ That breathes upon a bank of violets—  
“ Stealing and giving odour\*.”

His dog, too, gave evident signs of hearing something unusual—ran from his master to the brink of the precipice—then returned jumping towards him, and seemed rejoiced that they were once more within reach of a human habitation.—His sagacity assisted his master to follow the sound; and descending the mountain, by an entangled and almost overgrown sheep-path, that led from one pointed rock to another, he at length entered one of those woods of larch, pine, and chestnut, that fill many of the hollow bosoms of the Pyrenees; and though the trees rendered it entirely dark, the music, which still continued at short intervals to float in the air, led him on, till, in a small glade, overshadowed by rocks clothed with brush-wood, he saw



\* Shakespeare.

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a small cabin, or rather cottage, where he had no doubt of finding an asylum for the night: his terrier now run gaily before him, and was presently saluted by the loud barking of one of those dogs which guard the Pyrenean flocks—but on meeting, the animals courteously saluted each other, and the shepherd's dog seemed glad to shew the strangers to his master.

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CHAPTER VIII. *Continued.*

THE moon, though not yet risen above the trees, which on every side shaded the rocks surrounding this solitary glen, yet afforded general light enough for Willoughby to perceive a groupe of peasants assembled round the door of a cottage, superior in size to any of the cabins of the shepherds which he had yet visited.—As he approached, the sounds which had guided him towards it ceased; and a man advanced to meet him, whose air and manner were very different from the native mountaineers whom he had been accustomed to see, though his dress was nearly the same. Willoughby accosted him in French, told him he was a stranger who had lost his guide, and desired to be permitted to remain in his cottage till the morning enabled

enabled him to find his companions.—The man to whom he spoke hardly allowed him to finish the sentence, before, in language unadulterated with the Patois which is spoken in that country, and is a coarse mixture of Spanish and French, he expressed the utmost solicitude for his accommodation—and leading him to the door of the cottage, presented him to his wife, to an old man her father, and to several young people whom his music had assembled round the cabin—and who were inhabitants of a little groupe of cottages dispersed at short intervals among the woods on this part of the Vallée de Luron

Every individual of this simple party was eager to shew civility and attention to the stranger.—“ Louison,” said he who appeared to be the master of the house, and who had met Willoughby—“ Louison, go and prepare what our cottage affords, to refresh this gentleman, who may well have occasion for it, after such fatigue as he has gone through.” Willoughby owned he was almost exhausted—and in a moment milk, bread, and such other simple food as they themselves lived upon, were before him.

With

With the same hospitable simplicity, Louison went again, at her husband's request, to prepare him a bed, which one of the younger brothers of his host relinquished to him; saying he could find a lodging that night at a neighbouring cottage.—Le Laurier, which he found was the name of his host, then pressed him to retire to his bed—but Willoughby, refreshed by what he had eaten, found his curiosity so strongly excited, by the manners and language of this man, that it became more powerful than fatigue—and he could not help expressing a wish, to know how a man, who possessed such musical talents, and whose conversation was certainly not that of a mountaineer, should be found inhabiting a sequestered nook, in the bosom of the Pyrenees.

“ I inhabit it, Sir,” replied Le Laurier, “ because I was born in it; but it is true, that I have also seen a great deal of other parts of the world—and that it is not yet a month since I quitted the capital of France, to return hither, after a very long absence.”—“ Long, indeed,” said his wife, who had now rejoined them—“ Alas! so long”—and she  
sighed

sighed deep'y—"that I never expected, Sir, to have seen him again."

"Let me hear," said Willoughby, "not only what you have to relate of yourself, but what is now passing at Paris, which you say you have so lately left—I have been so long wandering among these mountains, that I am wholly ignorant of the consequences of that fermentation which was evident there among all ranks of men when I passed through it?"

"And I was in the midst of it all, Sir," replied Le Laurier—"for my master, the Chevalier de Bellegarde, was among the prisoners who were released from the castle of Mount St. Michell—but our history is too long for this evening:"—he gave, however, a brief detail to Willoughby, of what had passed at Paris the preceding July—and then, gaily turning the conversation, said—"Well, Sir, but here am I, after all this, returned to my cottage in the Pyrenees, and here is Louison and my family—we are all happy together—and what is yet better, my dear master is restored to his home here below us."—"And where is his home?" "Oh, Sir, the Chateau of  
of

of Rochemorte, where his family have lived since the beginning of the world, I believe, is just down in the valley—have you never seen it?—to-morrow, please Heaven, you shall,—and you shall see my master—who is now indeed the Count of Bellegarde—for his father and brother are dead—you shall see him, Sir; and see how a man enjoys liberty that has been a prisoner so many years—Not, indeed, that he is so happy as some people would be, because of the misfortunes in the beginning of his life—which always hang upon his mind—but now, I hope, in time, he will get over them.—For my part, I think it folly to lament what we cannot help, or regret what cannot be recalled—and I wish the Chevalier was of my disposition.”

“ ’Tis a very fortunate one, at least for yourself,” replied Willoughby—“ and has undoubtedly helped you gaily through the world.” “ No, Sir, not gaily—but tolerably amidst the severest of those misfortunes, which I shared with the Chevalier, I had always a persuasion that I should revisit my cottage and my Louison.”—“ Ah, thank Heaven, your persuasion was a just one, my friend,”

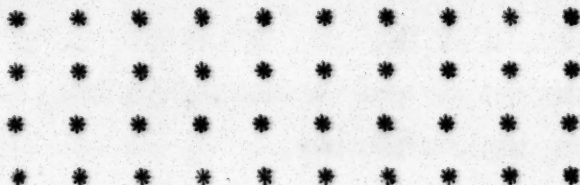
friend," replied his wife—and now that we may not part with melancholy impressions on our minds, let us have a little more music."

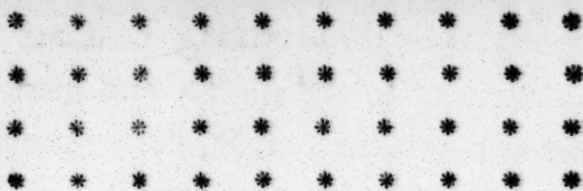
Le Laurier then began to play on the instrument Willoughby had before heard, and which was something between a lute and a Spanish guitar—he touched it with uncommon taste, and sang a simple rustic air; the cadence was solemn and pathetic, and at every close, the female part of his auditory joined their voices in unison.—Willoughby had now time to observe the groupe before him by the clear light of the moon, which cast a mild and unclouded radiance around them—The scene was simple and affecting—Le Laurier, a fine manly figure, sat on a seat of turf by the side of his door—His wife, a very handsome woman, stood leaning against the side of it, her head inclined towards him; a girl, twelve or thirteen years old, who was his eldest daughter, leaned on the turf, and looked up towards him, with a sort of innocent and affectionate admiration; while a boy of seven, the youngest of his children, had fallen asleep as he sat at her feet, and rested his head on her

her

her lap;—two or three young peasants were behind, listening to the music, and gazing at the stranger; and, in a chair, before the door, the venerable father of the family sat, contemplating the felicity so lately restored to them all, by the return of Le Laurier—with the mild resignation of reposing age.

A thousand fragrant smells floated in the air, after the rain; and the lightest wind whispered among the woods by which they were every way surrounded.—Not a sound interrupted the plaintive pastoral air, which the performer now began to play, while his wife and daughter alternately sung a stanza.—It was a kind of romance in Patois—but Willoughby understood it to be the complaint of a mountain shepherd, whose mistress had forsaken him for a richer establishment.—There was nothing new in it, but it was the language of nature, and brought forcibly to the mind of Willoughby his own misfortunes.





The soothing melancholy which every object around him seemed to breathe; the light of the moon trembling among the waving branches, of which Celestina had so often remarked the effect when they were wandering together; the simple cadence of rustic music, even the happiness which he saw on the countenances of his host and family, combined to raise in his mind regret and languor.—Never could he now hope to enjoy such a scene with Celestina; never was he likely to taste the delight of being restored to all he loved—Oh, no!—Celestina was the wife of another—and the world had no happiness for him.—As he indulged these melancholy thoughts, he sat almost motionless, and appeared to be attending to the music of *Le Laurier*—but on a sudden they quite overcame him, and striking his hands together, he started up, and walked suddenly away from the little assembly.

His

His host immediately ceased to play, and following him, enquired, with unaffected solicitude, if he was ill.—Willoughby, immediately recovering himself, thanked him for his kindness; and assured him, that his emotion was occasioned merely by the song he had heard, which had brought some unpleasing recollections to his mind.—The man, instead of attempting to console him by commonplace speeches, said, he would then leave him a moment; and hoped he would soon rejoin them, and allow them to wish him a good-night.—Willoughby walked on a little farther towards the wood—he looked up to the moon—"Even at this moment," said he, "perhaps the eyes of Celestina are fixed on thee, mild and beautiful planet. Those fine and expressive eyes, which I have seen fill with tears of admiration and delight as they have contemplated the beauty of the universe, and the wisdom of its Creator—Ah, Celestina!—our hearts were made for each other—but yours—yours is perhaps changed, and to me is lost as well as your person."—He dared not trust himself with this train of thought; but turning, walked slowly back towards the  
cottage

cottage door, where only Le Laurier, and his Louison, now waited to shew him to his bed. As he walked silently along, the bells of a convent below seemed to be calling its inhabitants to their evening prayers; and from an higher part of the mountain, which arose very suddenly beyond the woods, a small bell answered, and was re-echoed among the rocks:—On his reaching Le Laurier, he required what these sounds meant—"The bells, below," said he, "are those of the convent of St. Benoit, about half a mile below us; and the smaller one is that of Father Anthony, a hermit, who inhabits one of the rocks above—he has lived there many years."

"And where is the castle of Rochemorte?" enquired Willoughby.

"It is almost close to the convent," replied Le Laurier—"and if you wish to see them both, I will wait upon you thither to-morrow."

Willoughby now repeated his acknowledgments for the courtesy he had received; and retired to his rustic bed—where fatigue, in despite of the depression of spirits, which his  
last

last reverie had brought upon him, gave him up to repose; and he, for a while, enjoyed that

“ Sweet forgetfulness of human care,”

without which the wretched would lose the power of enduring their wretchedness; and the happy, that of enjoying their good fortune.

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## CHAPTER IX.

**BY** the break of day, the following morning, Willoughby had left his rustic couch, and joining his host and his family, partook of their simple meal. He felt some concern, on reflecting on the panic poor Farnham must have been in, when the guide returned without him to the place of rendezvous, the preceding evening.—He expressed his uneasiness on this head to Le Laurier, who said, he knew the place described, perfectly; and would immediately send thither the son of a neighbouring shepherd, who was then employed about his cottage, and bring his servant and the guide to him: in the mean time, he proposed to shew Willoughby the chateau of his master; a proposal which his guest readily accepted.

Louison

Louison, however, on their being about to depart, had, in her very expressive face, a look of concern; and, in her manner, an appearance of inquietude, for which Willoughby wished to account—He was not long left in suspense: she took her husband's hand, and said, "My friend, you will not leave me long."—"No, simpleton," replied he—and then turning to Willoughby, he gaily exclaimed—"Here is a woman who is afraid of trusting her husband to go half a mile!"

"Ah, Monsieur,"—said Louison—"you would not blame me, if you knew how he once left me—he went away only for a few days, and he staid near three years."

"But not voluntarily, indeed," answered Le Laurier—"I met my master, my dear master, who had been so kind to me—in prison—in distress—in a state of mind bordering on insanity—and I could not leave him."

"I do not blame you for that, my friend," said Louison; "but I own I am afraid of its happening again."

"How happen again!—the Chevalier—  
or

or rather the Count, my master, is not now as he was then !”

“ Ah, no !—But you have owned yourself, that he is restless and unhappy ; and though he appears at times delighted with being restored to his liberty, his estate, and his daughter, yet, that at times his mind is unsettled, and his schemes wild and uncertain—and if he should take it into his head to travel again !”

“ You fear that I may be tempted to travel with him.”

“ Yes,” said his wife—“ indeed I do.”—Le Laurier then tried to laugh away her apprehensions, and they left her ; while Willoughby felt this dialogue give new force to the curiosity he had to see the Count de Bellegarde.

As their way was down through the woody side of the mountain, they soon reached the domain of the chateau ; in which, the first object that struck Willoughby, in a spot which had once been cleared of trees, but where the underwood, and a smaller growth of wood, again almost concealed it, was a pavilion, which had once been magnificent, but was now in ruins.—It was built of various coloured-marbles,

bles, found in the Pyrenees; was of Grecian architecture, and seemed to have been a work of taste. The pillars of the portico, though broken, yet supported its roof; and behind it were three apartments, that had once been richly furnished: one, as a banquetting-room; the other two as rooms for the *Siesta*\*, which is usually taken here as in Spain.—The canopies of yellow damask, were fallen, and the hangings of the rooms devoured by the moths, and decayed by the damp from the windows; which, having never been glazed, the shutters had long since dropped down.—There was something particularly melancholy to the mind of Willoughby in contemplating this building, once the seat of gaiety, splendor, and luxurious repose, thus deserted—and he enquired of Le Laurier, if the present Count never intended to repair it.—“Sir,” replied he, “My Lord, the Count, has hardly had time to think about that yet, for he has been so little a while at his castle that every thing

\* *Siesta*—reposing for an hour or two after dinner, during the extreme heat; as was usual in Spain, Portugal, Italy, and the West Indies.

there remains as it was—ruinous enough.—But, as for this pavilion, I question if ever it will be put in order, though my Lord has such an odd sort of a liking to it, that the moment almost he got home, he came down to look at it.—It was quite late in the evening; but it was not dark—and he looked in at the window, for that night I could not open the door, the key was lost—and the locks were all rusty—and by what he said, I am sure there is some story belongs to this place.—The people of the castle, indeed, always had a notion of its being haunted ever since the death of my lord's sister, whose heart they say was broke by her father's ill usage.—Certain it is, that the old Count caused this place to be shut up, and took away the fine glassess and pictures that were in it once—but what you see now he left to fall to pieces.—There used to be large trees all around it; and all manner of flowers, and the stream, that now almost stagnates among those reeds and rushes, and with difficulty finds its way to the moat of the castle, was then brought into a bath, behind the banquetting-house, and into a basin, which

which is now grown over with weeds and grass, so that it can hardly be traced.

Willoughby left this desolate spot with a sigh, and as his companion led him through the obscure paths of the woods that surrounded it, he enquired whether the castle itself had equally suffered from time.—“Oh, yes, Sir,” replied Le Laurier, “from time, and from war, too.—It was formerly a place of great strength, and of great importance, as a pass into France, from the Spanish side of the Pyrenees; and held out a long siege when the famous Count of Bellegarde, my Lord’s ancestor, defended it for Henry the Fourth, *our* king; against the army of the League.”—“Perhaps?” said Willoughby, “your Lord may not like the intrusion of a stranger into his retirement?”—“Oh,” replied his conductor, “we may not happen to meet him; or, if we should, it will be a sufficient introduction and recommendation, for you, Sir, that you are an Englishman, for he loves the English.

Encouraged by this assurance, Willoughby proceeded, and in a few moments, the woods ascending a little, as they reached the extreme

base of the mountain, opened into what could only be called a plain, when opposed to the surrounding hills, for the ground was rugged and uneven, scattered with masses of ruined buildings, that had formerly been part of the outward fortifications, but of which some were fallen into the fosse, and others overgrown with alder, ash, and arbeal. The gate of the castle, and all beyond the moat, however, was yet entire, as were the walls within its circumference, bearing every where the marks of great antiquity, but of such ponderous strength, as time alone had not been able to destroy.—Where breaches had been made by cannon, the walls had been repaired; but this work being of less durability than the original structure, had gone to decay; and the depredations of war were still very visible. The whole was composed of grey stone; the towers, at each end, rose in frowning grandeur, above the rest of the building; and having only loops, and no windows, impressed ideas of darkness and imprisonment, while the moss and wall flowers filled the interstices of the broken stones; and an infinite number of birds made their nests among the shattered

tered cornices, and half-fallen battlements, filling the air with their shrill cries.

Over the moat, which was broad and deep, but now only half-full of water, which was almost hidden by aquatic plants, sheltering several sorts of water-fowls, that now lived there unmolested; a draw-bridge, with massive chains, led to the gate of the first court, under an high arched gate-way, defended by a double port-cullis: this court was where the castle guard were used to parade—It was spacious, and the buildings that surrounded it were gloomily magnificent; but now, no warlike footsteps wore away the grass which grew over the pavement; no martial music echoed among the arches and colonades—one solitary figure alone, appeared slowly walking with his arms crossed, on the terrace that led to the second court.—“There is my Lord, the Count,” said Le Laurier. “Speak to him, then,” replied Willoughby—“and apologize for my intrusion.” Le Laurier advanced, with his hat in his hand, and at the same moment the Count, who then first perceived him and Willoughby, came towards them.—His

military air, and dignified figure, were tempered by the mild and courteous manner with which he moved forward to receive the stranger whom Le Laurier announced to him. He was greatly above the common height, thin, and a little bent, as if from depression of spirit—but his face, pale, fallow, and emaciated as it was, was marked with such peculiar expression, that all the adventures of his life seemed to have been written there.—When he spoke, his dark eyes were full of fire and vivacity, yet at times they were wild; and at others, heavy and glazed—his brows were a little contracted, and hollowness about his temples and cheeks, and the strong muscular lines of his whole face, seemed to bear the harsh impressions of the hand of adversity, rather than of time: for though his hair was grey, and he looked much older than he really was, Willoughby did not think him above four or five-and-forty: at his breast was the cross of the order of St. Esprit; and his dress, that of a captain of cavalry, was not modern, and apparently neglected—his whole appearance instantly announced him to be a man of high rank.

If

If Willoughby was pleased with his manner and address, he seemed equally, or even more gratified by the curiosity expressed by an Englishman to visit him. "You see me here, Sir," said he, "released only a few weeks ago from a long imprisonment, wondering at my freedom, and a stranger in my own house. To those only, who have been the victims of despotism, it would be easy to comprehend my sensations on such a sudden emancipation; and the triumph with which I reflect that I owe it to the same noble efforts which have given liberty to France—to my country."

"Ah!" continued he, pausing—and losing at once all the vivacity with which he had, a moment before, spoken—"ah! what sensations of concern are mingled with this exultation—I regain my freedom—but where shall I regain my happiness?"

He now fell into a deep musing, which lasted only a moment—while Willoughby walked by his side, on the terrace—then suddenly awaking from it, he cried—"But it is too soon to trouble you with this sort of conversation—we shall have time enough—for I

flatter myself, Sir, with a hope of your staying with me, as long as you remain in this country—you must have no other home.—If you knew the pleasure I have in conversing with the English!”—he paused again, as if forgetting what he meant to say—and then added—“I will introduce you to my daughter—to my little Anzoletta—for I have saved her—that one little gem is restored to me in all its lustre amid the wreck of every thing else that was dear to me—we will find her now.” He then entered through another arched way, the second court of the castle, and Willoughby accompanied him in silence, while Le Laurier, with his hat in his hand, followed as the Count bade him.

They entered an immense hall; barbarously magnificent; it was roofed with beams of oak, and the sides covered with standards, and trophies of armour, the perishable parts of which were dropping to pieces.—The narrow Gothic windows were filled, not with glass, that admitted the light, but with glass, painted with the achievements of the family; mingled with the heads of saints and martyrs, whose names are now no where to be found, but  
in

in the archives of the neighbouring convent. But, in contemplating the innumerable coats of arms that were blazoned on the windows, and on the banner that hung in faded majesty, between them, Willoughby could not help recollecting what food they would afford for the favourite speculations of his uncle—and his thoughts dwelt a moment on the scene that might have passed in consequence of his absence, in the family of Castle-north.

These reflections, however, he had neither inclination nor time to indulge—for the Count ascending a broad, but steep stair-case of stone, that led out of the hall, and wound within one of the turrets, entered a gallery, and at the end of it was his daughter's apartment, the door of which was open, and Willoughby was immediately introduced to a young person, who sat before a frame, working on a piece of embroidery: a woman between fifty and sixty, who seemed to be a kind of governess, was with her.

Willoughby was pleased by the graceful simplicity of her figure, and the beauty of

her face—but when she spoke, in answer to the compliment he made her, this pleasure was converted into amazement—he fancied he heard the voice of Celestina!

So strikingly did its tones resemble those to which his heart had been always tremblingly responsive, that had he not seen who spoke, he should not have doubted of its being Celestina herself.—He started—and felt the blood rush into his cheeks—nor could he immediately recollect himself enough to reply to what Anzoletta said; and again call forth those sounds, to which, the second time she spoke, he listened with increased astonishment, and more painful delight; for, not only the similarity of her voice, to that of Celestina, was more evident, but he saw a resemblance to her in the air and manner of Anzoletta, that assisted the delusion.

Anzoletta seemed to be about the age of Celestina, but her figure was less: her hair and eyes were much darker, nor had she that dazzling and radiant complexion which made it always difficult to believe of Celestina, that she was a native of the South of Europe—the features of Anzoletta were, perhaps, more  
regular,

regular, and were not turned like Celestina—so that the resemblance consisted in that sort of air of family, which we sometimes observe among relations—a kind of flying likeness, which we now detect, and now lose.

The Count seemed highly gratified by the notice Willoughby took of his daughter—to whom he now spoke, and bade her prepare herself for dinner, for that his guest was to remain with them—He then led Willoughby back to the room where he usually sat himself; and as they went, he said—“Is not my Anzoletta charming?”—“She is indeed,” replied Willoughby.—“Perhaps,” added the Count, “perhaps you would not believe that she is the child of the daughter of a man of inferior rank, one of my father’s vassals.”—“Is she not *your* daughter, my Lord?” enquired Willoughby.—“Yes,” replied the Count, “she is my legitimate daughter; and as such, I glory to acknowledge her—but her mother was *roturiere*—and, to my marrying her, she owed all her misfortunes; and I many of mine.—But if ever you think it worth while to hear the incidents of a life, that

that has, I think, been marked with some singular occurrences, I shall have a melancholy pleasure in relating them.

“ Nothing would oblige me so much,” said Willoughby, whose curiosity had been every instant increasing—especially since he had seen Anzoletta.—“ May I, till I can be so gratified, enquire where is the mother of your lovely daughter ?” “ Yes,” replied the Count; “ and you will hear a fresh instance of the barbarous policy which despotism encourages and protects. Her mother! she was compelled by my father, the last Count of Bellegarde, to enter into a convent of Carmelites, at Bayonne, and there to take the vows. She was my wife, by the laws of God and man—but I was absent with my regiment—I was unable to protect her—and the power of the governor of the province, and of an enraged and tyrannic father, were united to tear her from me.—Would to heaven, we had been the only victims—but there was yet another!—another, who is gone whence there is no return.”——Here he fell into one of those fits of silent musing, to which Willoughby had,  
even

even during their short acquaintance, observed him to be subject.—It lasted, however, only a moment, and then recovering from it, he clasped his hands eagerly together, and cried, with energy—“ But, for my wife—my Jaquelina—thanks to the generous, the glorious spirit of my country—I shall retrieve her—she yet lives—I have seen her through the iron bars of her cloister—I have spoke to her!—I have, in my bosom, a handkerchief which she gave me, bathed in her tears!—She told me where to find our child—our little Anzoletta—and I go to Paris to demand and obtain her liberty: to claim her as my wife, and to be enabled to bring her hither, to a husband, who, changed as she is, by confinement and affliction, still adores her—to a daughter, whose early excellence promises to reward us both for many, many years of separation and sorrow.”

The eyes of the Count were filled with tears, as he ceased speaking; and Willoughby, —whose heart was as tender as it was manly, was deeply affected.—“ Heaven grant you all your wishes, Sir!” cried he—“ and that  
your

your private happiness may be one of the innumerable blessings attending on public felicity."—The Count wrung his hands—and cried, with yet increased vivacity, "It will—it will, my friend!"—There was in his manner a something bordering on wildness, as he continued this discourse, which Willoughby remarked with some concern—he was not, therefore, sorry, when it was interrupted by the entrance of Le Laurier, who told him, that the messenger he had dispatched, had found his servant and the guide; and, relieving them from their fears for his safety, which had been cruelly severe upon poor Farnham, had brought them both to the castle, whither his wife had directed them.

Willoughby had been under a good deal of concern for Farnham, who, he knew, must have been dreadfully alarmed for the safety of his master; his servant's arrival, therefore, was particularly welcome, and he was glad to change his clothes; for which purpose, he now begged leave to retire—The Count ordered Le Laurier to shew them to an apartment, and to take care he had every accommodation

modation he desired.—Willoughby, as he marched gravely along, through the long galleries, and across the gloomy hall, fancied himself a knight of romance; and that some of the stories of enchanted castles, and wandering adventures, of which he had been so fond in his early youth, were here realized.

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## CHAPTER X.

**AFTER** a repast, rather hospitable than splendid, during which the looks of paternal admiration and tenderness with which the Count observed every action of Anzoletta, and her innocent and agreeable vivacity, rendered them both more attractive to Willoughby: Monsieur de Bellegarde, finding that Willoughby rather wished to listen to the history he had promised, than to take any repose, during the heat of the day, proposed retiring to the north gallery, and there beginning this interesting account. Willoughby most readily agreed to the plan—and the Count, dismissing his daughter and her governess, led him thither

This

This room extended far on the north side of the building—and looked over the moat to a wood of fir and cypress, fringing the abrupt ascent of the mountain, which rose almost perpendicularly from the plain. As this acclivity commanded the castle, two strong redoubts were built on it, where, in hostile time, parties were stationed to keep the enemy from possessing posts, whence the castle might be annoyed. In the port-holes of these fortresses, now fast approaching to decay, the cannon yet remained, though rusty and useless—and the strong buttresses, and circular towers, mantled with ivy, were seen to aspire above the dark trees, on every side encompassing them—while, a little to the west, from a fractured rock of yellow granite, which started out amid the trees, a boiling and rapid stream rushed with violence, and pouring down among the wood, was seen only at intervals, as the trees either crowded over it, or, receding, left its foaming current to flash in the rays of the sun.

It was altogether one of the most sublimely beautiful landscapes Willoughby had ever  
seen,

seen; and he contemplated the scenery with pensive pleasure, while the master of it thus addressed him :

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Perhaps you are so well read in the history of France, as to make it unnecessary for me to remark—that my family is ancient and illustrious.—My father, the Count of Bellegarde, was educated with every prejudice that could make him tenacious of his rank, and anxious to support it.—He was married early by my grandfather to the heiress of the house of D'Ermenonville; and his eldest son, the only issue of that marriage, inherited from his mother the great property of that family.

But ambition, of which my father possessed a great share, both from his temper and his education, saved him not entirely from the influence of softer passions.—During the life of his first wife, an indigent relation of his own, was received into the family of one of his sisters, as a dependant—she was beautiful and interesting, and my father being released, by death, from an engagement, in which his heart had never any share, married her—and  
thought

thought himself overpaid, by the felicity of his second marriage, for the little satisfaction he had found in the first.

But though he had in one instance, suffered his inclinations to conquer that aspiring temper, which under less powerful influence, would have led him to seek for a second great heiress, he seemed determined to apply himself with more assiduity to the attainment of power and honour, by other means—He had some capacity for business; was daring in forming schemes, and obstinate in adhering to them—proud, vindictive, and violent; with such a portion of national pride, as made him hold every other nation but his own in the utmost contempt—and, whenever they seemed likely to dispute the superiority of France, he was tempted to wish, like Caligula, that the people so presumptuous, had but one neck, that he might destroy them at a blow.

With this disposition, you will easily imagine, the inveteracy with which he regarded the English.—He held a high post in the war-department of France, in 1755, when those hostilities commenced, in which, for a series of years, the English had almost always  
the

the advantage—events that added to national hatred, or a kind of personal and peculiar malignity—for of many of the operations in which his country failed of success, the Count of Bellegarde was the projector.

By a long course of defeat, however, his master, Louis the Fifteenth, and his co-adjutors, grew weary of his influence; and, in 1759, after the loss of Quebec, he was suddenly dismissed in disgrace.

Nor was this mortification the only one he was at that period fated to sustain.—A violent and infectious fever at the same time deprived him of his wife—and, wounded thus deeply, by public and domestic misfortune, he took the sudden resolution of quitting the world, and retiring to this castle, with my brother, my sister, and myself.

Hither, then, he came—leaving, at Paris, his eldest son, who had been some time in possession of his mother's fortune, and had lived entirely independent of his father, and on no very friendly terms with him. To the young, gay, and dissipated D'Esmeronville (for he took the name of his mother) the austerity of a statesman, and conversation  
of

of a politician, were alike repulsive; and he had no feelings about him that disposed him to submit to the authority of a parent, from whom he had nothing to expect—for it was well understood, that of all the Count de Bellegarde either possessed from his ancestors, or acquired from his political advantages, D'Ermenonville would inherit only that share of which, by its being entailed, his father could not deprive him.

The error of which the Count thought he had been guilty, in allowing to this eldest son early independence, and boundless expence, made him determine to adopt, in regard to me and my brother, a conduct altogether contrary.—On his retirement from the world, my brother, who was the eldest of the two, and called the Baron de Rochemorte, was near fifteen, and I was only fourteen months younger—yet, though at that age, we should have been either pursuing our studies, or with the army, in which we had both commissions, my father took us away with him: and, with a governor whom he engaged, because he was the most rigid pedant he could find, he fixed us both in what we then thought

thought the desolate solitude of Rochemorte—a place which he had fixed upon for his own residence; not only because it was so far from the scene of his former elevation; but because it was the only one of his capital houses that was not entailed on D'Ermenonville.

The gloomy solitude in which he lived—the power of life and death which he possessed in his domain, and the proneness of his mind to superstition, which was encouraged by the Monks of the neighbouring convent (who soon found the advantage of having so liberal a benefactor), at once darkened and soured a temper, never very good. Accustomed to dictate and command, he could not now divest himself of the habit: and his vassals, and his sons, being the only persons over whom he could now exert it, were the victims of his harsh and imperious spirit—for in them he delighted to discover, or to fancy faults, only for the satisfaction of imposing punishment.

It may be easily imagined, that to two lads of our ages, and who had from temper and constitution a keen relish for pleasures of  
every

every kind, the life we led was insupportable. The mild and soft-tempered Genevieve, our sister, who was then not more than twelve years old, though from her sex and disposition, more accustomed to, and able to endure solitude and confinement, began to feel the weight of those chains, of which, however, she did not complain; but endeavoured, by her soothing sweetness, to make ours fit more easy.—She was my father's favourite, and her influence had, for some time, the power to assuage the harshness of his temper—but, by degrees, even that failed of its effect, and his mortified pride, his lost happiness, and his gloomy notions of religion, combined to increase this ferocity, and irritate his asperity; till, at length, his children, though the children of a woman he so fondly loved, seemed to afford him nothing but objects of anger and tyranny, and he was left alone to the influence of Father Ignatius, a Jesuit, whom he took into his house as the director of his conscience; and whose purpose, it seemed to be, to estrange him from his family entirely.

There

There is a point, beyond which, the endurance of the most patient sufferer, cannot go—Genevieve, indeed, was not yet arrived at this point, but the Baron and I had long since passed it, and determined to break the fetters, which, in their present form, we did not think even paternal authority had a right to impose. The Baron, therefore, wrote to D'Ermenonville, representing our situation, and entreating his assistance to deliver us from it.

The Marquis D'Ermenonville had, perhaps, no great affection for us; he could not be totally indifferent to the representation of the Baron; and felt, perhaps, some pleasure, in being able to thwart his father, where it seemed to be a sort of duty to act in opposition to him. For this purpose he immediately, and by a way which we had pointed out to him, sent us a considerable supply of money, and directed us both to quit the castle in the night, and find our way to Perpignan, where his servant and horses should attend to conduct us to Paris.—He urged, not only the cruelty the Count de Bellegarde was guilty of, in

in thus obliging us to waste the best of our days in a desert; but the appearance it must have to the world, that when a war was carrying on, two young men, enlisted in their country's service, submitted to be confined, like Monks, in a cloister.—This remark would have been enough to have fired us with ambition and military ardor; but to the incitements of honour, he added the allurements of pleasure—and every scruple that remained (for I had still some as to leaving my father without his permission) gave way before their united influence.

I could not, however, with equal success, conquer the regret I felt at leaving my beloved Genevieve, to whom, from our earliest infancy, I had been particularly attached.—She would, we were well assured, be compelled to encounter all the fury and indignation of the Count, when our departure should be known; and when we saw her tremble with the mere apprehension of it, we would very fain have obviated every difficulty that seemed to forbid our taking her with us: but, child as she was, she answered with firmness and resolution, of which her gentle tem-

per seemed little capable; "No, my dear brothers," said she, "it is fit you should go—but that I should stay—no point of honour, no military duty calls *me*; and I will not desert my father—he is unhappy—and has need of me—he must not be deprived at once of all his children—and, if he treats me with rigour, the consciousness of not having deserved it, will enable me to sustain it with patience."

It was necessary, however, that she should appear wholly ignorant of our flight—and we dreaded that her resolution would give way, when she was charged with having been acquainted with it; insomuch, that we should now have repented having made her a party in our secret, could we have borne the thoughts of leaving, abruptly and unkindly, a sister, whom we both so fondly loved.

At length, the hour came for this cruel parting.—My father, who since his residence here, had affected all the state of a feudal baron, and even many of the precautions of a besieged chief, though he had no enemies to apprehend, but the wolves and bears of the Pyrenees; not only had the draw-bridge  
taken

taken up every night, but had a sort of guard parade, at stated hours, the courts of the castle. Our desire of liberty, however, surmounted all the difficulties by which our escape seemed to be impeded; and, by means of our sister, and our own resolution, we descended in safety, from one of the lower windows; crossed the moat, which was then full, in our drawers, by swimming; and dressing ourselves on the opposite bank, we proceeded on foot to Perpignan; and with hearts exulting in our success, and the joy it gave us allayed only by our apprehensions for Genevieve.

Our tutor had taken a fancy to wine, and we took care liberally to supply him—in consequence of which, and of the increase of pleasure he found, from this easy indulgence of his favourite passion, he had insensibly abated of his former strictness; suffered us every evening to go to the apartment of Genevieve; and frequently took, in our absence, such plentiful potations, that he was in bed, and asleep, before we returned to our apartments, which were within his. Thus, we

were not missed till the morning; and, as we left no traces on our way, and had not even entrusted a servant with our secret, the pursuit that was then made for us, was quite ineffectual. We arrived safely at Perpignan; in spirits too elevated to be affected with the fatigue of our long walk.—We found that D'Ermenonville had punctually adhered to his promise; and, on his horses, and attended by his servants, we proceeded gaily to Paris.

D'Ermenonville received us with more cordial friendship than I believed to be in his nature—he furnished us with money to equip us for joining our respective regiments, as became the sons of the Count of Bellegarde—and assured us of his continued assistance, till my father could be brought to reason—it is not, therefore, wonderful, that his friendship made us blind to his faults; and, that we saw not the dissolute libertine, in the kind and generous brother.—In fact, he had many virtues; and it was to him we owed our support after the peace of 1763 restored us to the pleasures of Paris. Then, however, the Count of Bellegarde, though he resisted every argument

ment which could be brought by the other parts of our family, to induce him to receive, and forgive us; yet was so far averse to our owing any farther obligation to D'Ermenonville, whom he held in abhorrence, and no longer acknowledged as his son, that he agreed to make us each an handsome allowance.

Peace being made, my brother, the Baron de Rochemorte, went into Germany, where, during the war, he had formed some attachments; and I was for several years in garrison with my regiment, hearing nothing of my family but what I learned from the letters my sister contrived, by stealth, to send me. After our elopement, she had been, for some years, more rigorously confined—and had suffered inconceivable harshness and cruelty from her father—but at the end of six years, though his temper was far from being softened by age, the death of the Jesuit, who had been his confessor, seemed to have procured some little alleviation to her sufferings. A younger, and less-austere director, of the same order, had succeeded to the government of his conscience; and Genevieve now in-

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formed

formed me that, accustomed as she had been, almost from her infancy, to confinement, the moderate severity of that in which she now lived, was comparatively easy to her—that her father admitted of her services with more pleasure than he used to do; spoke to her with greater kindness; sometimes allowed her to walk out, and had promised that the daughter of one of his vassals, for whom she had conceived a friendship, should be allowed to reside with her at the castle, as her companion: she always added her vexation, that the execution of this promise was, she knew not why, always delayed from time to time; though her old governess was become quite useless as a companion—but her greatest uneasiness seemed to arise from our long, and as she began to fear, endless separation.

This regret she repeatedly dwelt upon, with so much pathetic tenderness, that I at length determined to go in secret, and in disguise, to Rochemorte, and embrace once more this beloved sister; for whom, long as we had been parted, I still felt the warmest affection.—I was at Paris when I made this resolution, where, a short time before, I had  
formed

formed an intimate acquaintance with a young Englishman, the second son of a nobleman—he was two or three years younger than I was; in person, remarkably handsome; and in manners, the most engaging man I ever met with.—Our acquaintance soon became the sincerest friendship—and as he communicated to me every interesting circumstance that befel him—so my situation in regard to my father, and my increasing desire to see my sister, were no secrets to him.—He entered into all my solicitude, and encouraged me to indulge the inclination I had to visit Rochemorte in disguise, for the pleasure of seeing Genevieve.

A letter I at that period received from her, determined me to hesitate no longer.—She intimated, that her situation was become extremely unpleasant, from the extraordinary behaviour of the Spanish Jesuit, who had succeeded old Ignatius—that this man seemed to have designs of the most improper nature, in regard to her; and, that it was he, who had hitherto opposed her having Jacquelina, the young person to whom she was attached, with her; because he foresaw, he should then have less frequent opportunities of entertain-

ing her alone: finding, however, the Count disposed to indulge her, and being unable to form any longer pretences to prevent it, he had at last told her, that he would immediately influence the Count to oblige her, if she would consent to ask for the addition of another member to the family, and receive, as if at her own desire, a sister of his, who must be a superintendant over both her and her friend, and replace the superannuated governess, who was no longer capable of her charge.—To this, my poor Genevieve told me she had consented, rather than not have the company of Jacquelina, to cheer her solitude—that Jacquelina was consequently arrived, and the other expected every day—but that, notwithstanding she now had a companion, the Jesuit continued to find but too many opportunities to entertain her with conversation which she could not misunderstand.

My blood boiled with indignation, while I read this letter, and I instantly communicated the contents of it to my friend, Ormond.—“It is not possible,” said he, “that you can hesitate, my dear Chevalier, how to act—let us  
set

set out instantly for Rochemorte—you see a friend ready, not only to attend you, but to lose his life in your service.” We departed the next day, followed only by two servants, and arriving at Perpignan, began to consult on the means of meeting Genevieve, without the knowledge of my father, or the inhabitants of the castle—and the properest expedient that occurred to us was, to disguise ourselves and our servants, as hunters, and to watch, in that dress, till chance should throw my sister in our way.

I sometimes thought of going openly to my father, and making one effort to awaken his paternal feelings; to obtain my own pardon, and my sister’s liberty; but after consulting with Ormond, we agreed, that it was better to endeavour to see her first; for a failure in the success of this scheme would probably occasion her to be so closely confined, that we might never have an opportunity of seeing her at all.

Equipped, therefore, as I zard hunters, we reached this castle—and wandered about a whole day in its neighbourhood without any

success—the weather was so intensely warm, for it was now autumn, that I believed my sister came out only early in the morning, or late in the evening—and that the best probability of meeting her, was at those hours—to take up our abode near the castle, therefore, was material, and I recollected the banqueting-house in the wood, which had then, I imagined, been long neglected, and where our residence could not be suspected. But, on entering, I was surprised to find it newly fitted up, and sumptuously furnished with every article that could contribute to luxury and repose—this had been done by the Jesuit's directions, and here he now and then made little entertainments for some favourite fathers of the convent and their female penitents, which Apicius or Marc Antony might have beheld with envy.

Dread of the Count's power and severity, effectually secured every part of his domain from the intrusion of any of the neighbouring peasants. The pavilion, therefore, furnished as it was, was never locked—and, as I imagined nobody had so good a right to it as myself, I  
took

took up my abode in it without much apprehension of being dislodged.—My friend occupied the other room, and our servants found a lodging in the deserted cabin of a shepherd, on the other side of the castle; from whence they were ordered to watch for the appearance of the ladies we desired to see; and immediately, on perceiving them, to acquaint us.

The whole of the second day passed as the first had done; we wandered about the woods that skirt the castle—but all about it appeared the desolate abode of sullen despotism.—At night, when we had no longer any thing to fear from the observation of those who might belong to it, we approached its walls more nearly, and watched the lights at the windows, hoping that Genevieve might pass with a candle; though even then it would have been very difficult, if not impossible, to have apprized her of our being so near.

If my friend had been eager for the expedition, he was now more earnest for its success.—The wild and mountainous country, around a castle such as is described as the habitation of enchanter, and monsters of fable,

was

was exactly suited to inflame his ardent and romantic imagination—and when, to these circumstances, was added our purpose, to save a young woman from the harsh severity of a father, and the wicked hypocrisy of a Jesuit, he became an absolute enthusiast; and vowed, like a true knight errant, never to leave the spot till our adventure was successfully accomplished.

The second night, however, we were slowly retiring to our pavilion, and had almost reached it, when we fancied that among the trees, on one side of us, which were then cut into alleys, we heard female voices talking low and plaintively.—The evening was so profoundly still that we heard every leaf that quivered in the scarcely-perceptible air; and these voices we now lost, now heard more distinctly—till at length I was sure that one of them was the voice of Genevieve, though it was so long since I had heard it. I would have flown into her arms—but Ormond, for once more considerate than I was, withheld me, by representing to me, that if the person with her should be the Jesuit's sister, we should be ruined by our rashness. Instead, therefore, of  
shewing

shewing ourselves abruptly, we glided along on the other side of a treillage of beech, which entirely concealed us, and, listening attentively, heard distinctly, that it was to her friend Jacquelina, that my sister addressed herself.

I knew not whether my voice or the sight of me could alarm her least; but at length determined to walk from the banqueting-house, and meet her. We both, therefore, proceeded slowly down the walk in which she was, leaning on the arm of Jacquelina; but neither of them immediately perceived us—and I had time (for though it was evening, every object was yet distinct) to observe the wonderful alteration that time had made in the person of my sister.

I had left her, a beautiful girl, of twelve years old; her fine hair hanging loose over her face and neck; and her features, though then lovely and expressive, not yet formed.—She was now in her nineteenth year—with the figure of a nymph, and a countenance beaming with sensibility and sweetness—with a sensibility that seemed to have no object, and with sweetness that had something of patient acquiescence infinitely interesting. Her companion

panion was so beautiful a woman, that at any other time, I should have been immediately struck with her charms; but at this moment, I had no eyes but for Genevieve—and Ormond, whose heart had been prepared for any impression, was so fascinated, that forgetting my injunctions of silence, he exclaimed, “Heavens! Chevalier—you never told me that your sister was an angel!”

At this exclamation, though not uttered in a loud voice, Genevieve, whose eyes were before fixed on the ground, raised them, when seeing two men approach, she was extremely alarmed, and taking Jacqueline by the arm, she cried, “Here are strangers, my friend—let us hasten back to the castle.”

“No,” cried I—“No, Genevieve, it is no stranger, but your brother, who comes to defend and protect you.” “My brother! my dear brother!” said she—“what, both! is it possible; can you be both so good?”

I held her in my arms, for she was unable to support herself—while Ormond passionately exclaimed, “Oh, would to Heaven I were your brother! but accept me, loveliest of women,

women, as your friend; and be assured, that I will defend so glorious a title with my life."

She was soon so well recovered as to listen to what I related to her, and her beautiful eyes were turned towards Ormond, full of such expressions as charmed his very soul—while she thanked him for having accompanied her dear Chevalier. From her conversation, and from that of her amiable companion, I learned, that my infatuated father, was not only entirely governed by his confessor, but had lately shewn so much attachment to the sister whom he had introduced, that there was every reason to apprehend the consequence of the increasing influence of both. Genevieve, however, spoke of her father's failings, and even of his unreasonable harshness towards her, with reluctant sweetness that was bewitchingly interesting; and Ormond, in this short conversation, was gone whole ages in love.—His eyes watched every turn of her countenance—his ears drank the soft sounds of her plaintive voice.

I saw that the beauty, the simplicity of Genevieve, aided by the singularity of her situation,

tion, and the scene in which he saw her, had effected an instance of what has often been denied, and often ridiculed—love at first sight. Neither Ormond, nor my sister, nor I, were conscious of the course of time : but Jacquelina at length reminded her that it would be hazardous to be longer absent from the castle. She instantly recollected herself, and said with a sigh—My Chevalier—we must part—when shall we meet again?” It was agreed, that by the earliest dawn of the following morning we would wait for them in the wood, near the pavilion : we attended them as far as we dared, towards the approach to the castle, and then slowly and unwillingly bade them good-night.

Ormond stood watching my sister as she passed among the trees, and when he could see her no longer, he turned to me, and said, with an energy peculiarly his own, “ Bellegarde, I am in love with your sister to distraction!” “ I am sorry for it, my friend,” said I; “ and why sorry,” interrupted he—with an air of displeasure; “ because,” replied I, “ this attachment, if it indeed becomes permanent, though very honourable to her,  
may

may be a source of misery to you both.—My father has so great an antipathy to an Englishman and a Protestant, that were a man, who is both, to possess the world, I am convinced he would refuse him his daughter.”—“Refuse,” cried Ormond: “Do you think I would ask him? or do you, Chevalier mean to leave your sister—such a sister—here in his power?”—“I hardly know what I mean yet, my dear friend. Let us, however, do nothing rashly, lest we injure the objects we wish to serve.”—Alas! at that time, I was cool and collected, and could argue with the romantic enthusiasm of my friend; but in a few days I was as madly in love with Jaqueline, as Ormond was with my sister.

The impediments between us, were as great as those between my friend and Genevieve—Jaqueline was of inferior birth, the daughter of one of my father’s vassals; and to the swollen pride of the Count of Bellegarde nothing could be so repugnant as such an alliance. I was not yet of the age when sons were allowed to dispose of themselves; and my allowance from my father would, I was well assured, be instantly withdrawn, if I offended him

him anew—All these considerations, however, weighed nothing against the violence of my passion—and determined as I was to marry Jacquelina, and to give Genevieve to my friend, the only difficulty seemed to be to find a Priest on whom we might depend; for, sensible of our affection as were the objects of our love, they refused to leave their home unless under the protection of their husbands.

While I was studying how to find and secure the fidelity of such a man as we had occasion for, Genevieve endured from the insolence of the Jesuit, and the encroaching authority of Mademoiselle D'Aucheterre, his sister, insults which she dared not avow to us in all their extent. But Jaquelina, when she was alone with me, spoke with less reserve, and told me she had no doubt but that it was the plan of D'Aucheterre, the Jesuit, to marry his sister to the Count: and that so entirely was he governed by him, that there was no doubt of his falling into the snare. This was very unpleasant intelligence; but I forgot it when she added, that she dreaded every day lest the walks Genevieve was now allowed to take should be prohibited.

It

It was necessary immediately to hazard something. I contrived to make an acquaintance with one of the younger Monks of the convent—he had never seen me as the Chevalier de Bellegarde, and believed, for some time, that I was an hunter, from Pau in Berne. At length, when I believed myself tolerably acquainted with him, I told him who I was, and with what view I had so long lingered about my father's abode, from whence I had been many years exiled. From the manner of his receiving this intelligence, I believed I could trust him—It was very hazardous; for the Fathers of the Convent were for the most part decidedly in the interest of the Jesuit—But I offered to this Monk the means of gratifying some of those passions which his poverty and mode of life afforded him little opportunity of indulging—and he agreed to do whatever I pleased.

The rising sun of the following morning saw my friend Ormond the enraptured husband of the lovely Genevieve; and gave me, in Jacquolina, the only woman who seemed to be worthy to be her friend.—Trembling at every breath of air, at every whisper

whisper of the falling leaves, they hurried back to the castle—Where an unusual degree of tranquillity seemed on that day to reign.—The Count spake kindly to his daughter—and she, encouraged by the certainty of now belonging to the man she loved, put a restraint upon herself, and behaved with more civility to D'Aucheterre and his sister than she could generally command. In the evening they met us as usual; but our felicity was embittered by the apprehensions for our safety that had taken possession of Jacqueline.—“Though there is not a peasant, or a shepherd, round the domains of the castle,” said she, “that loves the Count well enough to do him any kindness on his own account, yet fear may have the influence which affection and gratitude have not. Some of them have been telling the servants that two strangers have been seen for many days among the mountains, who call themselves Icard hunters, though they have no dogs with them; that nobody knows where they sleep, or how they live; and that they are suspected to belong to a banditti who have for some time infested the Vallée d'Aran, about the source of the Garonne.

ronne. This whisper," continued Jacquelin<sup>a</sup>, "terrifies me. It was only to-day I heard it, and I have never had a tranquil moment since: I figure to myself that your lodging in the banquetting-house may be discovered: that you may be taken up—imprisoned—punished."—I endeavoured to appease the fears of my angelic wife, though I felt that they were too well founded. Ormond, intoxicated by love, and knowing less of the manners of the people than I did treated, them slightly—"Let them come," said he, "are we not armed?" The following day, however, Genevieve and Jacquelin<sup>a</sup> met us in increased alarm. The reports among the servants gained ground—the Jesuit had heard of them, and had said to Genevieve and her friend, that if such men were lurking about the confines of the castle, their early and late walks would become very unsafe, and that he must speak to the Count to forbid them.

To remain another night in the pavilion was not safe. Our little council deliberated what to do, and Love was the president. Under his auspices, the timid Genevieve learned courage to propose what appeared a  
more

more hazardous measure than to remain where we were. "The eastern side of the castle," said she, "is never inhabited; the guard-room, and the rooms above and under it, have not been opened for many years;—in that quarter, you, my Chevalier, may recollect there was a considerable breach made in one of the sieges, and the windows are dismantled and broken still—as nobody ever goes near that range of rooms, would there be much danger in your remaining in them till we can depart?"

"The danger," cried Ormond, "is no consideration, but why should we not depart immediately? why should you and Jacqueline ever return to the castle?"

To this my sister answered, that unless precautions were taken, such as she feared we had not thought of, our flight would undo us—  
"My father," said she, "by the death of that nobleman, who was the most powerful among his enemies, has obtained the government of Roussillon, and has even had offers of other advantages which may awaken his dormant and disappointed ambition. Thus armed with powers to detect our flight, consider what  
would

would be the consequence of our being missing, if we are not sure of getting out of his reach before he can exert that power. Secure, if possible, the means of an escape, and we will fly: in the mean time, you must think of your own safety till that can be done."

We were too much in love to raise any difficulties to a plan which brought us nearer the objects of our affections; and the remark Genevieve made as to the difficulty of our carrying her and Jacquolina with us, without some quicker means of conveyance than their delicate limbs afforded them, was perfectly just. How to procure such conveyance was a matter that required more deliberation than the present moment afforded, and it was therefore agreed that at night, when all about the castle was quiet, Genevieve and Jacquolina should be at one of the lowest windows on the eastern side; and that we should cross the moat, and by their aid ascend to that window, which we considered as a very easy undertaking.

As it was now late in the autumn, and there was no moon, it was dark enough for our purpose. We crossed the moat with ease,  
and

and found our lovely conductresses waiting for us; with almost equal ease ascended the broken wall, and I was thus in my father's house unknown to him, and took possession of the paternal mansion of my ancestors as if I had been a robber and an assassin.

Here, however, under such circumstances, I passed the most fortunate period of my life—Ah! short and fleeting felicity—which never, never can return again!

We were not, however, so intoxicated with our present happiness, as to neglect the means of its continuance; but nothing was so difficult as to carry them into execution. It was only of a night I could get out, for with such a commission I was unwilling to entrust the daring and impetuous Ormond; and the application I made for horses at two or three villages at hours so unreasonable, raised such suspicion of my intention, that I twice narrowly escaped being seized by the peasants as one of the banditti; and once, on my return to the castle, was watched and compelled, instead of entering it by the window, as usual, to plunge into the woods, and conceal myself till the following evening: while my wife, my  
sister,

sister, and Ormond suffered the most cruel anxiety and were almost dead with apprehension.

After this unsuccessful sally, they entreated me not to venture out again, and we continued to live on some time longer in security. The immense extent of the castle made our abode in this uninhabited part of it attended with very little risk; for the passages were all stone, and our footsteps could not be heard, even if we had not taken all precautions against noise. The appearance of complaisance which Genevieve was compelled to assume towards D'Aucheterre, obtained for her any little favour she chose to ask of him: and he allowed her frequently to dine in her own apartment, while his sister was thus enabled to carry on, with more success, her plan of operations against the heart of the Count, in which indeed she had made a much greater progress than we apprehended. Thus we were supplied with food without raising any suspicion, and were so well content with our confinement, since it was the imprisonment of love, that could we have been sure of its continuance with safety to the objects of that love, we

should never have regretted our loss of liberty.

To this moment I am ignorant of the means by which we were discovered, though I can impute it only to the treachery of the Monk who married us. It was after midnight, near five weeks after our residence in the castle, that I was awaked by a loud shriek from Jacquelina, who at the same moment threw her arms about me.—I started up, and flew to a cutlass which I usually placed in a chair near the bed; and with which I defended Jacquelina for some moments, till I was stunned by a blow which one of the ruffians who surrounded me aimed at the back of my head, and I recovered not my senses till many hours afterwards, when I awoke in a kind of litter, in which two hideous figures guarded me, with their swords drawn. I was confined by heavy chains; and when I enquired why I was thus fettered like a malefactor, I was shewn a Lettre de Cachet, which directed me to be conveyed to the Bastile—and thither I was now travelling. Oh, Sir, if you have ever loved! you may be enabled to judge what were my feelings!—Yet, who was ever so cruelly outraged—who  
was

was ever torn from such a woman, unless it was my unhappy friend, Ormond!—whose fate I had reason to fear was yet severer than my own—because I doubted whether my father, savage and inhuman as he was, could exercise on me exactly the same degree of cruelty, which he would feel himself disposed to inflict on one who, in addition to his being the husband of Genevieve, was an Englishman, and an heretic. The anxiety I felt for his fate, and for that of my sister, and the dread of what might have befallen Jacquelina, whose shrieks, as they endeavoured to tear her from me, yet vibrated in my ears, made me insensible of my own sufferings, notwithstanding my wounds and the inconveniences of my confinement. But my guards were obstinately silent, and neither threats nor entreaties could procure for me the least intelligence of what was to be the fate of the beloved friends from whom they had divided me.

While any hope remained, I retained some degree of composure and recollection: but at length despair took possession of me—I became delirious—Furious, frantic, I was only prevented by my chains from destroying, first

my keepers, and then myself.—I knew nothing of what happened for many days, during the disorder of my senses : when I recovered them, I was in a room in one of the towers of the Bastile, so much weakened with the loss of blood that they had taken from me during my frenzy, that I could not leave my bed. My head had been shaved, and I was under the regimen appointed for those who are decidedly insane.—Pardon me, if I here ask your patience till to-morrow—the recollection of what I then suffered is too painful for me to dwell upon longer; and when I think that these sufferings were inflicted by a father! —Here the Count put his hand on his heart, and sighed deeply. Willoughby remarked in his eyes that unsettled expression that still bore testimony of the state of mind into which the sufferings he had been relating had thrown him; and extremely affected himself by the Count's narrative, he was glad, powerfully as his curiosity was excited, to delay hearing the melancholy catastrophe, for melancholy he feared it must be, till the next day.

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CHAPTER XI.

**W**HEN the Count de Bellegarde and Willoughby met the next morning, the former seemed perfectly composed, but pensive and melancholy. It was early—he proposed walking towards the convent; “and as we go,” said he, “I will conclude, as briefly as I can, my mournful history. I will not dwell upon the nature of my sufferings in the Bastille: of much of the time I passed there I have no perfect recollection; and for the rest, suffice it to say that, by the orders of my inflexible father, I endured all the rigours of imprisonment in its most hideous form, for several months, during which I made some attempts to escape—Attempts, the failure of which only served to convince me of the im-

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possi-

possibility of effecting it; and in the impotency of rage, I cursed my existence, and, I fear, reproached Heaven itself for permitting such horrors on earth. The idea of Jacqueline, abandoned to the inhuman vengeance of a man capable of acting with such malignity towards his own son; the thoughts of the misery in which I had probably been the means of involving Ormond and Genevieve, hardly suffered me to attend to my own wretchedness, when I was capable of feeling it; but many weeks passed in wild ravings about *them*, and then for myself I felt nothing.

“ I thus lost some of those miserable days, of the course of which, when I was sensible, I marked on the wall of my prison. I had now, though my reckoning was thus rendered defective, past near two years in my confinement, when my barbarous father, at the intercession of my brother the Baron, sent a priest to offer me my release on certain conditions: one of which was, that I should immediately, on leaving my prison, be conducted to my regiment, which was then in garrison at Lisle, and give my parole that I would not quit it without the permission of the commanding officer.

officer. Though I saw that this restriction was intended to prevent my gaining any intelligence of Jacqueline, of Ormond, or of my sister, I gave the promise desired, as being released from my detested prison always seemed a step towards *them*; and two days afterwards the governor of the Bastile delivered me to the persons whom my father had sent for me; and I was thus conducted, like a prisoner, to join the regiment, where the colonel, a friend of the Count's, took care to take the parole in the strongest manner; and believing, perhaps, that under such circumstances I should not feel myself bound in honour to keep it, he continued to have me watched so strictly that I was still in fact a prisoner.

“ And thus, at the age of twenty-nine, was I treated; my soul revolting against the tyranny, without the means of escaping from it, and consuming itself in vain projects, to see or to hear from the wife so adored—from friends so tenderly beloved.

“ A few days, however, after my arrival at Lisle, my brothers, D'Ermenonville and the Baron De Rochemarte, came in disguise to find me. They hardly knew me, so greatly was

I changed by despair and confinement; but without giving them time to express their concern, I enquired for Jaquelina—for Ormond, for our sister.

“ Their countenances, particularly that of the Baron, told me that I had only tidings of sorrow to expect; and knowing the state in which my mind had been, he studied a moment how to soften them; but the impatience of my fear would not give him time—“ Tell me,” cried I, “ tell me where is Jaquelina, where is Genevieve, where is my friend Ormond? They are dead, I know they are; that inhuman man, who calls himself my father, has destroyed them all.”

“ No,” replied the Baron, “ Ormond lives, and is long since returned to England—Jaquelina lives; but lives not for you; she has taken the veil.—As for our unfortunate sister, she is, perhaps, happier; she has been dead some months.”—This cruel intelligence—that of the three beings dearest to me on earth I should never again see either, was too much for me.—Again I lost the sense of my misery in delirium; and it was many days before I could attend to the consolation offered me by  
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the Baron, or the lighter arguments by which D'Ermenonville attempted to wean me from reflections which it could answer, he said, no purpose to indulge. The state I then fell into was only another species of madness. I no longer raved or vented my fury in cries and execrations; but I became silent and sullen: never spoke but to the Baron, who still attended me with paternal pity, and got leave of the commandant to do so; and whatever I said to him was only enquiries after some particulars relative to Jaquelina and my sister, in which he could not satisfy me—all that he knew being from my father, or Madame de Bellegarde; for the sister of the Jesuit, D'Aucheterre had long since been raised to that title, and had brought the Count to Paris, where he was again admitted to such a share of power as had enabled him to execute more securely their unnatural vengeance.

“As I was no longer capable of duty, and my malady seemed to be incurably fixed:—as Jaquelina had taken the vows, and was for ever out of my reach, the Baron obtained leave for me to go with him to a house he had in Normandy; where the patient pity with which he watched over me, gradually re-

stored me to my senses ! but I regained them only to feel with keener anguish all the horrors of my destiny. The Count de Bellegarde, now far advanced in life, and repenting, perhaps, whenever his new wife gave him leave to think, of his cruel treatment of his daughter, expressed some inclination to see and to forgive me ; but I felt that it was *I* who had much to forgive ; and, alas ! I felt, too, that though he was my father I could not forgive him.

“ The first moment in which I enjoyed both reason and liberty, I should have used in flying to Perpignan, where, with difficulty, I learned that Jaquelina was confined ; but I had promised the Baron, that I could not yet attempt it, and to him I held my word to be sacred, whatever it cost me to keep it : All my present satisfaction was in traversing the sea coast, near which my brother’s house was situated, looking towards England, whence I every day expected to hear of Ormond, to whom I had written. Impatiently I waited month after month for an answer. I wrote again ; but still I heard nothing. At length I recollected the name of an English gentleman, with whom Ormond lived in habits of intimacy

intimacy while he was in France. I wrote to him, and my letter was immediately answered. He informed me, that Captain Ormond, who had returned to England about ten months before in a very bad state of health, had been ordered very soon afterwards to America, with his regiment, which was sent thither to quell the troubles which about that time broke out in the English colonies. Thus I had no longer any hope of seeing my dear friend, who was of a disposition to have joined me in my attempt, however hazardous, for the recovery of Jacquelina, which I was at all events determined to try at.

“Wild and impossible as the project was, it had taken such forcible hold of my imagination, that reason was no longer heard. I concealed my intentions, however, carefully from my brother—affected composure, I was far from feeling; and, as he began to believe me reconciled to my destiny, he no longer refused to talk of Jacquelina, when I calmly led the discourse to that subject: and by degrees he told me all he knew, which was, indeed, little more than the name of the convent, where she had taken the veil, at Perpignan.

“Having

“ Having gained all the instruction I could I left a letter to the Baron, who had long ceased to insist upon any parole; and telling him that being now well enough to return to my duty, I should merely see Jaquelina, take an eternal adieu, and then rejoin my regiment. I sat out alone in the night, and taking bye-roads, arrived at Perpignan.

“ I found a brother of Jacqueline's who was settled there: he confirmed all I had heard of the compulsion that had been used by the Count to force my unhappy wife to take the veil. He had threatened the destruction of her whole family: he had imprisoned her father, and assured her that I was dead. If I shuddered at this relation, judge how my tenderness, my regret, my rage was increased when this brother of my Jaquelina went on to speak of what he thought I had known. That she became a mother during this inhuman persecution; and that an infant daughter then existed. My sister, too, had given birth to a daughter; and died in consequence of the anguish of mind she had suffered at having her child taken from her. “ Where are these children?” cried I, in an agony it is impossible to describe;—“ Oh carry me instantly where I  
may

may claim them!" "Alas, Sir!" replied my wife's brother, "my sister's child was taken by my mother, who, ill as she could afford it, would never part with it to the Count, who, offered to provide for it; because she doubted what were his designs. She doubted, indeed, with reason, for the other baby was sent away to Bayonne, as was then said; but every thing relative to it was so secretly managed, that nobody knew for a long time what was become of it: and it was not till some time afterwards that my sister, who from her tender affection for Mademoiselle Bellegarde, was as anxious for it as for her own, persuaded me to enquire about it; for we all dreaded to hear that the Count under the influence of the D'Aucheterres, had been very cruel indeed to it!

"Oh! Sir, reflect a moment on my feelings at this detail. In the same breath, I bade my informer go on with the account of all he knew of Ormond's child, and carry me to my own. The wildness of my impatience frightened him; he endeavoured to soothe me with assurances that my infant was living, and well, and then told me as gently as he could, that he had been guilty of a  
breach

breach of promise in naming it, for that the Count had made the whole family enter into an agreement never to let me know any thing about the child—Irritated by this new instance of barbarity, I swore, in a transport of passion, that I would have my daughter restored to me, or perish in the attempt; and that I would find the child of my murdered sister if I traversed the world.”—“Alas! my dear Chevalier” said my wife’s brother, “there will be danger enough for you even in attempting to see your own daughter; for the Count has never ceased to have it watched: but for that of your sister, you will certainly never recover it. All my researches, which I assure you were not indolently nor feebly made, traced it no farther than into the house of a certain Madame de Pellatier at Bayonne, a friend of the present Madame de Bellegarde, who undertook”——

“Madame de Pellatier!” cried Willoughby, “Oh! eternal Heaven, are you sure—Merciful God!—are you sure it was Madame de Pellatier?”

Amazed at the vehemence and singular manner of Willoughby, for which he could so little account—the Count looked at him a moment,

moment, and then said—"Am I sure? Yes, very sure—Have you then any knowledge of Madame de Pellatier?"—"Oh! if I could tell you," cried Willoughby, in agitation that deprived him of his breath—"but I cannot—'tis impossible—yet thus much—Did you recover the daughter of your sister—was she ever restored to you?"——

"No, never," answered the Count, "all the intelligence I was long afterwards able to obtain was, that Madame de Pellatier had placed her in a convent at Hieres, but her name was changed, and before I could obtain, after my last return to France, even this information, the people who had received her were dead, and I could only guess from some memorandums kept in the convent, "that a child (whom I guessed to have been the same) was taken from thence by an English lady."——

"It is Celestina," cried Willoughby, in the wildest transport, "it is my own Celestina. She is mine again—without a doubt, without any impediment, mine!"—He was conscious, that at that moment he was not in possession of his senses, so extravagant was his joy. The Count, accustomed as he had been to the impulse of violent passions himself, was astonished

nished at this phrenzy, because he comprehended not what had produced it, nor could Willoughby, for some moments, command himself enough to explain it; till at length, from this paroxysm of agonizing joy he sunk at once with as deep dejection, for the probability had occurred to him; that, at the very moment when he was exulting in having so wonderfully and so unexpectedly discovered the birth of Celestina, and thus recovered all he had lost—she was, perhaps, married—and no longer interested for him—nor solicitous to enquire on his account, to whom she belonged.

Then as every hour's delay might be fatal if this had not already happened, he determined to set out instantly for England. The wonder, however, with which he saw the Count survey him recalled his wandering and bewildered senses; and as well as he could, though very incoherently and inarticulately, he related his history to the Count.——

Monfieur de Bellegarde had not a doubt but that the Celestina of Willoughby was his niece; every circumstance, as they became cool enough to compare them, answered exactly. Convinced of this, and becoming every instant more partial to his guest, the Count

now

now entered with the warmest interest into all his apprehensions lest he should lose her; and approved of his hastening instantly back to England—Willoughby intreated him to return to the castle, that he might not waste a moment—"for on the event of a moment, perhaps," said he, "my life depends." As they returned, however, the Count concluded his own history, and Willoughby, since Celestina was concerned in it, commanded that portion of attention which, perhaps, no other subject, however otherwise interesting, could at that moment have commanded.

"I was not deterred," said the Count de Bellegarde, "by any of the threats that my father had uttered; but I flew to the convent where Jacquolina was. It was guessed by my impatience and ardour who I was—and I was refused admittance to the grate. I then had recourse to the disguise of a female dress; and, in despite of all the menaces that had been thrown out against their family, I prevailed on one of her sisters to accompany me."

"I saw her!—but she did not know me.—Her eyes were cast down; she was pale and thin—resignation and patience seemed to have  
softened

softened the horrors of her destiny—but they gave to her faded beauty an interest so powerful, that I never loved her so ardently as that moment—I would have forced myself through the grate, which was one of those that are so narrow as scarcely to admit an hand.—I threw myself against it—I spoke to her—she then knew me, and caught hold of the bars to save herself from falling—I kissed her hand in the wildest transports—I besought her to remember, that her vows were not—could not be binding, either in the sight of God or man!—that she was my wife; and that against the infamous tyranny that had divided us, all nature revolted.” Thus I raved, while tears, such as angels shed, fell from her lovely eyes—“ Oh! Bellegarde,” said she, when she was able to speak, “ This is all vain and frantic rage!—learn, my dear, dear friend, to submit, as I do, to a fate, which, cruel as it is, is inevitable—I am dead to you!—for from hence, no power, no force, can now release me—ah! they told me you were no more—or never, never would I have taken those vows, which my heart refused!—But it is done!—and this short moment is the last we shall ever have!”—At this instant

instant the superior of the convent, and several nuns appeared, and severely reproaching her, forced her from the grate—"Inhuman," said she,—“even this last moment is denied me!—farewell, my dear Bellegarde—farewell for ever—believe I am dead; and transfer the tenderness you felt for your Jacquolina—to her little Anzoletta—in her I still live.” This sentence was hardly articulate, amid the efforts her persecutors made to force her away—when I lost sight of her, again I threw myself frantically against the grate that divided, I beat my head against it—fury and despair possessed me anew—and I became, for some days, again insensible—or sensible to nothing but the sight of my little girl, whose innocent smiles appeased my rage, and made me recollect that there was yet a being in the world for whom I ought to live.

“Every calm interval was employed in projects, more wild, perhaps, than my wildest ravings; to force Jacquolina from her accursed imprisonment. I talked about it continually to her brothers, and persuaded myself that nothing was impossible to a man so injured, and so attached as I was. My father,

ther, however, was too powerful in a province, where he was governor, and in a community into which he had influence to get Jacqueline received, notwithstanding her resistance, and even her marriage. At this time, power did every thing in France, and nature and justice were silenced—thank God it is so no longer!”

In this ejaculation, Willoughby most sincerely joined, and the Count proceeded:—

“ My father, as I was about to observe, was too well served to leave me any probability of success in this mad project; far from being able to procure the liberty of my wife, I could not preserve my own—but was, under pretence of my insanity, carried away a prisoner from Perpignan; and the only favour the Baron could obtain for me was, that I might be confined in his house in Normandy.—Here I remained only a short time, sunk again into the impotent fullness of despair, when the regiment, to which I belonged, was ordered to America, and my father desired I might go. I wished for death—and had I had any motives to desire life, my honour compelled me not to hesitate. For America then I embarked; and on my arrival, my first care was  
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to enquire for the English regiment, in which my friend Ormond had a company. I heard, from deserters, that it had suffered greatly in the beginning of the war, and was ordered back to England. Even the mournful satisfaction which I had promised myself in embracing my friend, the husband of my beloved unfortunate Genevieve, seemed thus to be denied me; and every circumstance contributed to promote that desperation, that impatience of life, which is the effect of incurable calamity.

“ Before I left France, I had recommended my infant Anzoletta to the care of the Baron, in case of my death, and secured to her all the property that would be at my disposal, on the death of my father. I thought, that were Jacqueline dead, I should think of her with less painful regret, than I did now; languishing within the walls of a monastery; of my natural friends, only the Baron and D’Ermenonville, affected to feel any interest in my fate: the former was now deeply engaged in the duties of his profession as a soldier: and for the latter, he was decidedly a disciple of Epicurus—and made it a rule of his life to enjoy every

every possible pleasure, and avoid every possible pain—of course, my loss would be but slightly felt by either of my brothers—and my father—for so many years my persecutor and tyrant, would rejoice at it. I continually sought death as my only refuge against the evils he had inflicted upon me; and what was called bravery, was, in fact, despair.

“In one of the rencontres which our troops and the revolted Americans had with the English army, it was my chance to be stationed to defend a small post on the borders of an immense wood, with a small detachment of French. The engagement was warm between the main bodies; but the troops, under my command, were not called into the action. Impatient to be thus idle, I sent one of my aid-de-camps to the general, representing, that we were absolutely useless where we were, and entreating his leave to advance; when he returned and told me, that the battle was over with disputed success; that the English had suffered greatly, particularly in their officers; while the Americans and French, hardly in a better condition, were making their retreat, which I was directed to cover  
with

with my fresh troops. I advanced, therefore, through the wood by the way I was directed ; and after proceeding half a mile, I met a party of Indians, in the interest of the colonists, carrying with them an English officer, who was, they said, mortally wounded. By his uniform, he appeared to be of rank—I approached him, and spoke to him in French. Judge of my sensations, when I saw in this dying prisoner my friend, my Ormond !—Not even the calls of duty were so pressing as those of friendship.—I even deliberated a moment, whether I should not hazard every thing to attend him myself—but when I expressed this, though he could hardly speak, he conjured me to go on, and merely to take him out of the hands of the Indians.—“ I know I must die,” said the gallant fellow, “ but I would die in your arms—if you can, without injury to your honour, grant me such an indulgence.” I ordered a guard to convey him, with the utmost care, to the nearest French quarters ; and then hastening to obey the orders I had received, I had the happiness, successfully, to execute them ; and having done so, hurried to my friend.

I found

“ I found he had received every assistance which in the situation we then were, could be given him: he was easy, and though his wounds were mortal, his death was not likely to happen immediately.

“ He thanked me, as soon as he again saw me, for my attention to him—and then eagerly asked me after his wife—and his child—“ but she is dead,” cried he—“ my Genevieve is dead; I was but too certain of that before I left Europe.”—My silence, my tears, confirmed the sad truth. “ Well, my dear Chevalier, cried he, clinging my hand, “ I am following her fast—I knew what you would tell me of my infant—of that dear pledge of my Genevieve’s affection. Your inhuman father has eluded your search, as he did mine. Oh! I could curse him!—but I will not, because he is your father. If ever your friendly solicitude for the offspring of your sister, and your friend, should enable you to discover her, give her these pictures—they are those of her father—of his favourite sister;—of her mother—see,” added he—“ this resemblance of Genevieve which she gave me, when I received the dear avowal of her love; never till  
now

now has it left my bosom—and I conjure you, Bellegarde, never to part with it, till you place it on that of my daughter.

“My noble friend lingered a few days longer—not in great pain, however, and perfectly sensible—and then, in my arms, he resigned his gallant spirit to his God.

“This loss added strength to the gloomy resolution I had before made to die. Among my friend’s papers, which, by his order, his servant delivered to me, after his death, I found a narrative of all he had done, after his release from imprisonment in the Bastile, at the demand of the English ambassador (for he was there part of the time that I was, though we never saw each other,) to gain admittance to his wife, and to have his child restored to him—and such an abhorrence did this add to that I had already conceived against my father, that I could not bear the name of Bellegarde; nor endure to think of returning to breathe the same air with a man whom I considered as a monster.

“To France, however, I returned—without even a wound in all the hazards to which I had

voluntarily exposed myself. This inhuman father was still living—but my brother, the Baron de Rochemorte, had fallen at the head of his regiment, at the attack made on the island of Jersey—and I succeeded to his fortune—a fortune, which, ample as it was, could make me no amends for the excellent, the kind brother I had lost.

“Alas! I had lost two brothers—and two friends equally dear to me—they were not to be recalled—but I found a gloomy kind of satisfaction in complying with their last requests. That of my brother de Rochemorte was, that I would take his name; and most willingly I quitted that of Bellegarde—the dying request of my beloved friend I endeavoured—ah! how vainly endeavoured to fulfil—I never could discover his daughter till this fortunate day!

“But my residence among the Americans, had awakened in my mind a spirit of freedom. The miseries, the irreparable injuries I had received from ill-placed and exorbitant power, prompted me to assert it. I was now possessed of considerable property—useless to me, be-  
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cause Jacquelina could not share it—though comparatively free myself, I was wretched. In this disposition, it may easily be imagined, that if I possessed the power, I was not without inclination to add fuel to that fire, which immediately after the end of the war in America, was kindled, though it yet burnt but feebly in France. I wrote—I acted upon my newly-acquired principles, with the energy of a sufferer, and with the resolution of a martyr. I *was* already the martyr of despotism, and ruined in my happiness for ever. I knew that all the vengeance I could excite could injure me no farther.

“ I now saw Jacquelina—but she was still pining within her convent.—I saw my child—I held her to the grate while her mother bedewed her little hands with tears, which I kissed off!—It was a scene to move every heart but such as inhabited the breast of my father! Again, the hopelessness of rescuing my wife from her cruel bonds, gave him occasion to put other fetters on me. In the rashness of my desperation, I said, I wrote, I acted such things as made me be considered by govern-

ment as a dangerous person. My father took advantage of my rashness—he represented me as being disordered in my senses, and obtained an order for shutting me up in the fortress of Mont St. Michel.

“Between four and five years had I been a captive in that gloomy prison, when the glorious flame of liberty, of which I only saw the first feeble rays, burst forth—I regained my personal freedom, when my country became free—I found my father dead!—Every thing he could give away, his wife possessed, but this, and some other of his estates, were mine—and D’Ermenonville gave me, with the hands which then gave the title of Bellegarde, the name, which I abhor; and which, though it is yet given me by the people, who have been accustomed to give it to the head of my family, I will not keep—but take that of Montignac, which is my *untitled* name, the original designation of our family.

“The first use I made now of the general and particular freedom, in which I rejoiced, was to fly to Perpignan—but the moment is not yet come, when I can deliver my imprisoned  
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Jacquelina. I am, however, assured, that she will very soon be restored to me ; in that hope I came hither to attend to my long-neglected affairs, and to enjoy the society of my daughter. Even greater happiness has been the consequence of my abode here than I dared to hope ; for by you, my friend, towards whom the moment I saw you, I was impelled by an invincible propensity, I shall, I trust, recover the dear orphan child of Genevieve and Ormond.

“ In a few days I shall go back to Perpignan ; leave Anzoletta again in the care of her mother’s family, and then hasten to assist in the glorious business of securing the liberty of France—yes !—the immortal work of defending myriads yet unborn from ever suffering the oppressions, under which I have groaned.”

Here the Count de Bellegarde ended his narrative ; and Willoughby, with an inexpressible contrariety of sensations—joy and hope—fear and apprehension—being furnished with every assurance he could wish, of the real parents of Celestina, took a tender leave of the Count and Anzoletta, whose voice was to him as the voice of a seraph, promising him felicity

city to come, and he then departed, as had been agreed upon between him and the Count, for Perpignan: where he delivered, at the grate, a letter to Jacquelina—of whom the Count had desired that she would describe to Willoughby any particulars of the person of his wife, which she recollected—for in her care, the infant Celestina had been left a few weeks.

With trembling impatience Willoughby waited while the interesting, and still lovely nun perused this letter—and heard her, while his heart sunk with apprehension, thus describe the child of her unfortunate friend—

“She was,” said Jacquelina, “fairer than my child, and her features greatly resembled those of her father.—On her neck, a little on the left side, were three remarkable, though diminutive, moles.”—“It is enough,” said Willoughby—“those moles are on the lovely neck of Celestina—a thousand times have I kissed them as we played together in our infancy—and here on this portrait of her, drawn when she was about twelve years old, they are described.”

Jacquelina kissed the picture.—“Little as  
can

can be judged from a likeness done so many years afterwards, I feel an assurance," said she, "that this is the picture of my Genevieve's child. May heaven grant her those blessings which, in its unsearchable decrees, it refused to my lovely, luckless friend." Willoughby, who would not have been a moment detained by any interview less interesting, or less necessary, now took his leave, and with the utmost expedition, though all he could make, answered but ill to his impatience, he hastened on towards England.

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CHAPTER XII.

**W**HILE these things passed at Rochemorte, Celestina, no longer doubting of Willoughby's marriage, and entire desertion of her, was trying to acquire once more that calm resignation, which she had so often determined to adopt, and so often lost.—Montague Thorold accompanied Lady Horatia to Cheltenham; where, as Celestina foresaw, his ardent entreaties, and the wishes of her friend, so strongly enforcing them, gave her so much pain, that she grew hourly more fond of the scheme she had adopted, of travelling. If she found it difficult to evade the importunities of her lover, and her benefactress, she dreaded yet more the arrival of the

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the elder Mr. Thorold; who, about six weeks after Montague's recovery, came with him (after a short visit he had paid at home) to Cheltenham.

He soon found an opportunity of speaking to Celestina, alone, and then she became more than ever conscious of the influence that his solid understanding, his excellent principles, and his tender regard for her, gave him over her ingenuous mind.—Though he never complained, she well knew, that he was not happy in the other branches of his family, and that his hopes were particularly fixed on his younger son, whose attachment to Celestina, which, had it been successful, might have secured, in one point, the felicity of his father, had hitherto produced for him only anxiety and solicitude.

He had seen his life once more in imminent hazard, from the fierce and impetuous Vavasour, and from his own rashness, which he could not but condemn; he had seen, for many months, all his talents, and almost all his affections, lost and absorbed in this one predominant passion, and he knew not what the effect might be on his intellects,

and on his health, should he finally be refused: yet, while Willoughby was uncertain as to his own situation, or unmarried, the elder Mr. Thorold had been withheld from making any efforts with Celestina, on behalf of his son: now, those impediments were removed, he no longer thought himself restrained from applying to her himself. So mildly and rationally, however, he entered on this conversation, that Celestina retained more courage, while she heard him, than she, at its commencement, had dared to expect; and when he had recapitulated all the advantages which might, he thought, be derived, from her union with a man so passionately devoted to her, of suitable age; of easy fortune—one whose taste was congenial to her own; whose temper was remarkably good, and who had a heart uncorrupted by vice, and unexhausted by a long course of intrigue; and a family who would consider her admission into it, as the greatest blessing that they could receive; Celestina acknowledged it was all very true. “I own too, Sir,” said she, “that to many people, and perhaps to you, I may have appeared to give your son such encouragement,

as

as never ought to be given, unless it is meant to end in marriage.—I have felt, without having it in my power to avoid this seeming impropriety — yet he will do me the justice to say, I have always told him, that whatever were my sentiments in his favour, and however I wished to encourage those sentiments, because I was persuaded he deserved them, yet, that my heart never felt for him that decided preference, without which, I cannot believe, he could be happy, were I to give him my hand—I was too sure, that from an unfortunate prepossession, in favour of another, it never could feel this preference; and that, therefore, though I should always be happy to be considered as his friend, I never would be his wife. Allow me, dear Sir, to repeat to you, a resolution from which I do not believe I shall ever recede—you know how true a love and veneration I have for you—there is not on earth, a man whom I would so soon chuse to supply to me that sacred and tender relationship I have never known! and to call by the endearing name of father! but I cannot—indeed I cannot marry. I know not why, but some invincible persuasion hangs over

over me, that if I do, I shall be miserable, and render my husband miserable, whatever may be his merit or affection—and can I, ought I, under such a conviction, to wish it? Be assured, that if time and reason conquer this weakness—for perhaps it may be only weakness—if ever I feel that I can give to your son a heart, weaned from every other attachment, and worthy of his, I will say so—as candidly, as I declare the impossibility of my doing so now—and you are so liberal, that you will forgive my weakness, and save me, I am sure, from importunity, which is the more distressing, as it comes from those I so much esteem, and whose wishes it would be, on any other subject, my pride and my pleasure to obey.”

Mr. Thorold, after this conversation, and some other of the same nature, was convinced, that Celestina acted from motives of the most delicate honour—the more he saw of her heart and disposition, the more fondly he became attached to her; and the more ardently desired that she might become the wife of his son. He saw, that though her ideas were what would be generally called romantic, they were not cherished merely because they were  
so;

so; but that a high sense of the tender duty she wished to pay to the man with whom she was to pass her life, made it impossible for her to enter into such engagements till she was sure of fulfilling them according to her own ideas—and he hoped, that her entire separation from Willoughby; his unkindness and neglect on one hand; and on the other, the acknowledged merit of his son, would, though almost insensibly, yet not slowly, produce that change which she allowed herself to be possible, though at present it did not seem probable. In this hope he was contented to rest; and promising Celestina, that if she would still allow Montague to see her frequently, he should not teize her by importunity—he threw himself entirely on her generosity and sincerity; and after a visit of near a week, he left Montague at Cheltenham, by the desire of Lady Horatia, and returned home.

In a few days after his departure, Celestina had another and more painful scene to encounter. Cathcart arrived early one morning, and eagerly asked to speak to her—she went down to him immediately—but when she saw him, she dared not ask the purpose of  
a visit



a visit so little expected. He was pale—he trembled and hesitated—he looked fatigued and dejected.—Willoughby instantly recurred to her—for he was always the first object of her thoughts—“Is any thing the matter, dear Cathcart,” said she, “with Willoughby?”—“Oh, no,” replied he; “nothing new—I have not heard of him since he went, which I think strange.”

Celestina sighed, and thought she was able too well to account for it—“but is Jessy well?” “Yes, thank Heaven,” replied he: “but my sister”—“what, Mrs. Elphinstone?”—“no, my other—my unfortunate sister Emily—I have been sent for to her at Bristol, where, you know I went to her some time since, at your entreaty: she has now, I think, only a few days to live—my sister Elphinstone is with her—poor Emily wishes to see you—I know not how to ask such a favour of you; but you are *so* good—will you—can you oblige a family—who already owe to you all the happiness they possess?”

“What will I not do to give any part of it satisfaction,” said Celestina—“but do you, can you guess the reason of your sister’s wishes

to

to see me? surely Vavasour is not there?—

“ He was not, when I left her; but a few days before, he had been at Bristol, raving like a madman at the fatal intelligence he had then had confirmed—that Emily could not live. If, however, he should come, you can have nothing to fear, for I will not leave you a moment; and I know you so well, that I am persuaded, there are few disagreeable circumstances, which would not, to you, be compensated, by the reflection of having given comfort to the last moments of my dying Emily.”

This plea Celestina could not resist: she went, therefore, by the consent of Lady Horatia, with Cathcart, to Bristol; where a scene awaited her, that for some time almost suspended even her thoughts of Willoughby himself.

The lovely, unhappy victim, to early seduction, was in the last stage of a consumption—and, unlike those who are cut off by that distemper, was perfectly aware, and perfectly reconciled to her fate—her earnest wishes had been to be forgiven by Cathcart, and to die in the arms of her sister; they both now attended

tended her with the tenderest affection, and had even yielded to her request, to be allowed to see Vavasour, towards whom all her anxiety was now turned, and for his happiness she felt that concern, which she no longer was sensible of for herself.

Her exhausted heart was, from gratitude and habit attached to Vavasour; and she saw that her death would take away the only tie that had been some restraint on his ungovernable licentiousness: that his disappointment in regard to Celestina, had embittered his temper; and given him a sort of excuse for the libertinism in which he seemed resolute to persevere; and while his good qualities, his generosity, and his candour, as well as his attentive tenderness towards her, had made her affection for him the last sentiment she was capable of feeling: she fancied it yet possible, that young as he was, Celestina might be induced to save a man who appeared so well worth the attempt: and that, interesting as he appeared to her, he could not fail of having some interest with others, and particularly with one who had learned from Willoughby an early prejudice in his favour, which she hoped all  
his

his subsequent rashness had not yet wholly destroyed.

Such were the views of Emily Cathcart, in requesting this visit; and her beautiful eyes, lit up with the fire that was consuming her, became yet more dazzlingly bright when her lovely visitor was led into the room by her brother.

Celestina entered trembling; and fearing the sight of Vavasour, whom she had never met since the terrifying night at Ranelagh; but the moment she beheld Emily, she no longer thought of any thing but the affecting object before her.

Emily sat in a great chair, supported by pillows—the extreme beauty that had been so fatal to its possessor, still remained, though its lustre was gone—Emaciated, and of a delicate fairness, her hands and her face had a transparency that gave an idea of an unembodied spirit, and her dress was such as favoured the deception. The blood might almost be seen to circulate in her veins, so plainly did they appear; and her eyes had the dazzling radiance of ethereal fire, to which the hectic heat of her glowing, though wasted countenance, still

still added.—A few locks of her fine light hair had escaped from her head-dress; and played like broken rays from a receding planet, round a face, which only those who had hearts unhappily rigid, could behold, without feeling the sense of her errors suspended or overwhelmed by strong emotions of the tenderest pity.

She held out her hand to Celestina, as she entered, and in a voice faint and interrupted, from the difficulty with which she breathed, said—“ Ah! dearest madam, how good this is; how worthy that tender and sensible heart, of which I have heard so much”—she stopped; as if unable to speak more at that moment, and rested her head against the chair—Celestina affected to tears, sat silently down near her—Cathcart left the room.

After a short pause, she recovered strength to say, “ but a moment will be allowed me, perhaps; let me then hasten to thank you for this condescension, and to say, how earnestly it is my hope, that it will not be made in vain; but that it will afford me an opportunity of successfully pleading—for another penitent—for poor Vavasour.”

“ I for-

“ I forgive him most willingly,” cried Celestina—“ and most sincerely wish him happy.”

“ Ah, Madam !” said Emily—“ You must then carry your generosity farther—for you only can make him so—I dared to represent this in a letter to you—I now repeat it—victim, as I am, even in the morning of my days, I should, however, die in peace, for I hope my peace is made with Heaven—if I could see any prospect of Vavasour’s being happy ; reclaimed from that wild career where he is now wasting his time, his fortune, and his life. I owe him so many obligations ! I know him to have so good a heart ! that it is terrible to me to see him devoted as he is, and plunging into an abyss of misery, from whence it will soon be no longer in his power to return.—It has been a great consolation to me, that I have had some little influence in stemming the progress of the evil ; but it is you only who can save him from himself effectually ; and how worthy would it be of goodness, of compassion like yours ?”

Celestina knew not what to answer.—To promise what she never could perform, was  
little

little in her nature: yet did she not love to check the disinterested hope that thus animated the soft heart of the fair pleader. "I believe," said she, after a short pause, "I believe you are mistaken: and that I have no such power as you impute to me; be assured that, though Mr. Vavasour's conduct has been to me a source of the most poignant uneasiness, I not only will forget it, but shall rejoice in seeing him happy—for his own sake—and for the sake of that dear friend through whose means we first became acquainted: a friend"—her voice trembled, and she dared not attempt to name Willoughby, lest it should wholly fail her—"a friend who is still, and who I dare believe will ever be truly attached to him: and who, on his return to England, will, I am sure, use all the influence that friendship gives him over Mr. Vavasour, to recal him from a way of life you so much apprehend." She was proceeding to evade, as tenderly as she could, the pathetic prayer she had just heard, when Emily was seized with one of those spasms which announced her approaching death. Celestina, terrified, called for Mrs. Elphinstone; and, unable

unable to bear a scene in which she could be of no use, she retired to another room, where she passed with Cathcart, two melancholy hours, at the end of which, they heard that the fair unhappy Emily was no more.

Vavasour, who was in another lodging at the Hot-wells, no sooner heard of this sad event, than the wildest frenzy possessed him: nor did his having so long expected it, at all mitigate the blow.—He ran to the house, and regardless of Cathcart and Mrs. Elphinstone, who would have opposed these frantic expressions of useless regret, he threw himself on his knees by the bedside—called to her, as if she were still living—now swore she should not die—and now reproached Heaven that she was dead. From this state of temporary insanity, nothing had the power to recal him—till Cathcart, reproaching him very warmly, for the impropriety of his conduct, asked him, whether it was thus he meant to promote the last wishes of his sister, and obtain the pardon of Miss De Mornay? That name had still all its influence on the heart of Vavasour: who, by a strange, though, perhaps, not uncommon division of his affections, at once  
vehe-

vehemently loved the woman he had lost, and the woman he hoped to gain.—Starting from his knees, he asked where Celestina was? for Cathcart had not yet told him of her arrival, and had promised to prevent his distressing her.—“Miss De Mornay is below, Sir; but you must not go to her.” “Not go to her! who shall prevent it?” was his answer—and he hastily went down stairs.

When he entered the room where Celestina sat weeping with Mrs. Elphinstone, he had every appearance of a man out of his senses: but, at the sight of her, he seemed subdued in a moment; and while she dreaded some wild and frantic speech, he threw himself on his knees before her, and burst into tears.

His convulsive sobs, as he eagerly caught her hands, and pressed them to his heart; and the broken voice in which he attempted to speak, disarmed her at once of all the resentment which she had, till then, felt for his unwarrantable behaviour, when they last met—and so tenderly, in a voice of such soothing pity did she speak to him, that he soon became reasonable—thanked her for her generous attention; even blessing her, and calling  
her

her the restorer of his reason—while Celestina availed herself of this disposition of his mind, to prevail on him to retire; which he did, on her promise, that she would see him again the next day.

After a mournful night, of which more was passed in comforting and consoling Mrs. Elphinstone than in sleep, that day arrived, on which Celestina was not only bound by the promise which in the agitation of mind she was in the night before, she had made to Vavasour, to see him; but induced to declare to him again, how totally he was mistaken in supposing her engaged to Montague Thorold. Again he cherished the hope which she never meant to revive; and at once to do, what he knew would gratify her, while he acquitted himself of the promise he had given to his regretted Emily, he had a deed drawn up and executed, by which he gave to Mrs. Elphinstone, and her children, two hundred a year; and settled them at the house he had in Devonshire. On the moment of her departure, he gave this deed to Celestina, beseeching her not to open it till her arrival at Cheltenham. “And whither are you going, Mr.

Mr. Vavasour?" said Celestina, who felt her pity revive for him, now that she saw him so dejected and subdued. "Ah," replied he, "I am careless whither—I cannot, however, go back to my Staffordshire house in the state of mind I am in now; for I should infallibly hang myself;—I believe I shall go to London—for, even at this time of year, a wretched dog, such as I am, may find somebody or other to help them to get rid of themselves; and the gaming houses are always open.—"The gaming houses!" said Celestina.—"Aye," replied he, "I have been there always of late when I have been cursedly miserable—and play has a momentary effect on me, in making me forget other things. Perhaps, in wandering about London, I may meet with some unsettled, unhappy fellow, like myself, who may like to go abroad for six or eight months: we may go find Willoughby, perhaps, and my return may be the more welcome to *you*, if I bring you an account of *him*."

"Alas!" thought Celestina, "what account of *him* can I now hear with pleasure; unless indeed that he is well; that I always  
wish

with to hear! and I *think*," added she, her heart swelling as she said it—"I think I should *sincerely* rejoice to hear, that in his new situation—he is happy with his *wife*!"

Vavasour, again feeling the renewal of that hope which had almost escaped him, saw Celestina depart with more calmness than she expected. Cathcart saw her safe in the protection of Lady Horatia, at Cheltenham; and then returned to Bristol, to perform the last sad offices to his lost Emily; Vavasour, at his and Mrs. Elphinstone's request, leaving the place before her remains were consigned to their early grave.

The scenes which, during this period, passed in the family of Lord Castlenorth, were more turbulent, and to some of the parties equally melancholy.

The anxious peer, whose health was, as usual, a little amended by change of country, waited at Paris the promised arrival of Willoughby, with extreme impatience; impatience which had such an effect upon his feeble frame, that death, which had so long been laying in wait for him, now seized him, and at a period, when the blow saved him from knowing what

could not have been concealed from him many hours. Lady Castlenorth having enacted with great dignity, all that a mournful relict *must* do on such an occasion: and Miss Fitz-Hayman having also performed her part admirably, the will was opened in due form, of which Lady Castlenorth thought herself perfectly sure of the contents; and she had indeed secured to herself a great deal of money, and a splendid income, besides her settlement. The property descending to Miss Fitz-Hayman immediately, was about eight thousand a year; but, in a codicil (made in the immediate pleasure he received when Willoughby first declared himself resolved to marry his cousin) he had given him an estate of five-and-twenty hundred a year; and ten thousand pounds in money, as a nuptial present; without, however, affixing any conditions to the gift.

The short ceremony of reading the will being over, another was to be gone through less easy to Miss Fitz-Hayman; which was, announcing to her mother her actual marriage with Captain Cavanaugh—which she thought

must

must otherwise be revealed by somebody else.

The dialogue was short, but decisive—Miss Fitz-Hayman, or rather Mrs. Cavanaugh, had more courage than tenderness; and having now nothing to fear from her mother's influence with her father; and secure of her fortune, both at present and in reversion, she assumed rather an air of triumph than of contrition. Lady Castlenorth would be but faintly described by the strongest of those representations that have been given of an enraged woman, when she has been compared to a tygress robbed of her young.—Cavanaugh had possessed the art to make her believe, that his admiration of her mental perfections was the foundation of that attachment he felt for her; yet, that while he adored her beautiful mind, her fine person was an object of tender admiration. To find that he cared for neither the one nor the other; but had availed himself of her credulity to obtain a footing in the family; and money to get his matrimonial fetters broken, that he might marry her daughter, were convictions so ex-

tremely mortifying to her pride, that they, for a while, suspended the power of expressing her rage—When, however, that power returned, she raved like a lunatic—gave way to the most extravagant sallies of passion—and though her Lord was yet unburied, protested that the same house should no longer hold her and her “pelican daughter.” Mrs Cavanaugh was more calm, and retired to her room: where Mrs. Calder, at length, persuaded Lady Castlenorth to let her stay, till after the remains of her father were sent forward to England, which they were in a few days; and then Mrs. Cavanaugh set out, by the way of Rouen, to England also, with her husband, who was impatient to take possession of his great acquisitions, the price of so much patient perfidy.—Though he would willingly have been excused giving to Willoughby even the small share of the ample property which his uncle had assigned to him; yet he knew he must see the will, and finally obtain it. He thought it better, therefore, to continue with him the appearance of honour; and therefore wrote to him, informing him of Lord Castlenorth’s

north's death; of his own marriage; and the codicil in favour of Mr. Willoughby. But not knowing whither to direct this letter; for Willoughby had left no intimation of the route he meant to pursue, when he quitted Paris: he addressed it to Alvestone: where, with one on the same business from Lady Castlenorth, it lay, while Willoughby was wandering among the Pyrenean mountains, and while he pursued his impatient way towards England.

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## CHAPTER XIII.

**U**NCONSCIOUS of the good that awaited him, and dreading the evil that might be irreparable, Willoughby landed at Brighthelmstone from Dieppe. Though it was eleven o'clock when he got on shore, he ordered post-horses to be instantly ready; and used the moment he waited for them to take a slight refreshment. On the table of the room he was in, a newspaper lay—it was long since he had seen an English newspaper—and he took it up, where the first article that struck him was an account of the funeral of Lord Castle-north, after his having lain in state at his house in town.

Willoughby felt an immediate impression of concern for his uncle, and feared lest disappointment should have hastened his death.

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On himself, or any advantage he might derive from the event, he never bestowed a thought; but as the mind, under the influence of any predominant passion, returns immediately to its bias, however temporally diverted from it, it almost instantly occurred to him, that if his uncle had been so long dead, without his knowing it, Celestina might possibly have been as long married. Trembling, he looked among the marriages, but there were no names there at all resembling those which he dreaded to see united.—His chaise was ready, and he departed for London; for it was there only that he was likely to gain intelligence of Lady Horatia Howard, and he knew of no other clue to guide him to Celestina.

Celestina had left Cheltenham with her friend, and was now at Exmouth, where Montague Thorold was continually with them.—Whether he was present or absent, Celestina was equally pensive and melancholy; but it was only in the latter case that she attempted to indulge those sensations in the solitary walks which the sea shore afforded her: for she avoided as much as possible being quite alone with him, because her heart every day con-

firmed her in the opinion that she never could love another man as she had loved Willoughby, and it was distressing to her to be frequently under the necessity of repeating, what it inflicted such pain on her impassioned and indefatigable lover to hear. It was now late in September: the evenings soon shut in; and when there happened not to be a supply of new books, Lady Horatia often engaged Montague Thorold to piquet, while Celestina sat by them at work; or, if she could be sure he was so occupied as not to be able to follow her, she walked out alone, and as the moon trembled in the waves, recollected the nights when, with Willoughby and Matilda, in the early days of their innocent friendship, they used to mark and admire together this beautiful appearance of the sea illuminated by the moon.—Here, on this very spot, she had with him beheld it—The waves had now the same trembling brilliancy; the surrounding objects were the same; but Willoughby was changed: and happiness and Celestina were, she thought, parted for ever.

Such were her contemplations one evening, when, towards the end of the month, and of  
Lady

Lady Horatia's intended stay at the place, she left the company who were assembled at the lodgings; and who happened to be the elder Mr. Thorold, his wife, their son Montague, and Mr. and Mrs. Bettenfon, who being on a visit to the elder Mr. Thorold, when he was ordered to the sea for his health, had accompanied him all together to Exmouth, and were shewn every attention by Lady Horatia, as relations of her favourite Montague.

They were at cards; and Celestina, who never played, took the opportunity of her admirer's being engaged at a whist table, from which she knew he could not immediately escape, to go out—The wind was high, and the sea boisterous; it was growing dark, and she fancied a particular gloom hung over every object—still, however, it was luxury to her to be alone; she was particularly wearied by the conversation of Mrs. Thorold; and found nothing in that of Mrs. Bettenfon to make her amends: Bettenfon was ignorant insipidity itself; and time, instead of adding to the number of his ideas, seemed to have rendered him, if possible, more stupid—Amid such society, she could derive no pleasure from the con-

versation of Mr. Thorold and Lady Horatia; and the unusual weight she felt on her spirits seemed lessened, when she could sigh at liberty—and hear nothing around her but the wind, or the sea breaking against the shore.

She had not, however, been out long, before the chill and gloomy appearance increased; and darkness coming on, she slowly and reluctantly returned to the house—She heard, a little before she quitted the road, horses behind her; but not attending to them, she did not even distinguish whether they were the horses of the people of the place, or those of travellers. She entered the parlour, and sat down by the card table, where Montague Thorold, having performed his evening's task, had just resigned his place to Mr. Bettenson. Suddenly a voice was heard in the passage, enquiring for Lady Horatia Howard of her servant—"My lady is within, Sir," replied the man—"And who are with her?"—"Mr. and Mrs. Thorold, and" - - - The servant was going on—when the enquirer said vehemently—"It is enough—let me however see them." Celestina, at the first sound of this voice, had started from her chair—The second sentence  
it

it uttered affected her still more; but she had no time to answer the eager enquiry of Montague Thorold—"What is the matter?"—before the parlour door opened; and pale, breathless—with an expression to which only the pencil can do justice, she saw before her the figure of Willoughby.

There was agony and desperation in his looks. He gasped—he would have spoken, but could not. The company all rose in silence. Lady Horatia, who hardly knew him even by sight, looked at Celestina for an explanation, which she was unable to give—At length Willoughby, as if by an effort of passionate phrenzy, approached Celestina—and said, in a hurried and inarticulate way, "I would speak to you, Madam—though—to—this gentleman, I suppose," and he turned to Montague Thorold, "I must apply for permission."

His manner, his look, as wildly he cast his eyes around and saw all the family of the Thorolds assembled, which confirmed his idea of her being married, contributed to overwhelm Celestina with terror and amazement. She no more doubted of his marriage with his  
cousin,

cousin, than he did of hers; and could not conjecture why he came, or why he looked so little in his senses.—She sat down—for her limbs refused to support her—and faintly said, or rather tried to say, “I hope I see Mr. Willoughby well.”

Lady Horatia then addressed herself to him—desired him to take a chair, and to do her the honour of staying supper with her.—He heard or heeded her not—but, with fixed eyes, gazing on Celestina, he struck his hands together, and cried—while the violence of his emotion choaked him.—“It is all over then—I have lost her—and have nothing to do here—No, by heaven, I cannot bear it”—He then turned away, and left the room as hastily as he entered it.

“My dear Celestina,” cried Lady Horatia, “what does all this mean? Do, Mr. Montague—for Miss De Mornay is, I see, much alarmed—Do, speak to Mr. Willoughby—I am really concerned to see him in such a situation.”

“No;” said Celestina, who would not for the world have had Montague Thorold follow him—“No; I will go myself after him”—

Her

Her fears now gave her resolution, and without heeding Montague Thorold, who would have prevented her, she hurried after Willoughby, and overtook him just as he was quitting the house.

“ Dear Sir,” said she, “ dear Willoughby !” —At those well-known sounds, once so precious to him, he turned round—She took his hand—“ I am very sorry to see you,” continued she, “ in such agitation of spirits—I greatly fear—perhaps——” some misery between him and his supposed wife occurred to her—“ I am afraid something is wrong——”

“ Wrong !” cried he ; “ Wrong !—and do you, Celestina, inhuman Celestina, insult me with such an enquiry ?—Wrong !—am I not the most cursed of human beings ?——”

“ I hope not,” interrupted she—“ for your happiness”—She knew no longer what she meant to say ; nor did he give her time to recollect ; for eagerly rivetting his eyes on her face, and grasping her hands between his—he cried—“ My happiness ! and what of my happiness ? Is it not gone, lost, for ever—Have you not destroyed it ?—Damnation and distraction—Why do I linger here ?” He then

then plunged away, and rushed out of the door, where Farnham waited with two post-horses—Celestina, trembling, and attempting to stop him, followed.

He tried, however, to mount his horse, but could not: he desisted, leaned against it, with his arm over the saddle, and resting his head on his arm: Farnham spoke, and Celestina immediately recollected him. “What is the matter with your master, Farnham?” said she, “indeed he terrifies me to death!”—“Oh, Ma’am,” replied the honest fellow, sorrowfully, “my poor master! Come, Sir,” added he, interrupted by a look of anguish and horror from Willoughby—“Come, dear Sir!—you cannot ride any farther, I am persuaded, to-night; let me lead you to the inn.” Willoughby, without resistance, suffered Farnham to lead him a step or two; but he waved with his hand for Celestina to leave him, and faintly said—“Go! go, Madam!—I wish you well!—I wish you well!”—“Which is the way to the inn?” cried Farnham.

“Not to the inn—do not go to the inn,” exclaimed Celestina; “you are very ill, dear Willoughby; let us take care of you here; Lady

Lady Horatia requests it." Farnham led him towards the door again; he leaned upon him, and sighed loudly and deeply. At length he said, "I am a fool!—I came hither knowing all I know *now*, and ought to have been better prepared for it. But I am better: let me then execute my last resolution, and bid her one long, one eternal adieu."

There was a little vacant parlour near the door; there Willoughby sat down. The servants, who were assembled, brought candles: Celestina stood silently by the table on which they were placed; and Willoughby bid Farnham leave the room.

A short silence ensued. Willoughby seemed to be ashamed of his weakness, and trying to collect fortitude to bear like a man the cruellest moment he had ever past, he arose and approached Celestina, saying in a low, grave, and tremulous tone, "I have no right, Madam, to distress you—I have no just cause of complaint against you—I am very miserable—I deserve your pity—your prayers—I have been deceived—you, I hope, will never have so much cause to regret it, as I must have—you,  
I hope,

I hope, are happy—will be happy.”—He could say no more, but put his hand on his heart, and looked on Celestina with eyes so expressive of despair and grief, that all the exquisite tenderness she had ever felt for him returned at once; she forgot that he was (as she believed) the husband of Miss Fitz-Hayman; but he was in a moment the beloved Willoughby, the first and only possessor of her heart. She threw her arms around him, and sobbing on his bosom, became almost senseless from the violence and variety of emotions that overwhelmed her.

He shrunk, however, from her. “Who is it,” said he, “gracious Heaven! that I thus hold in my arms?—Not my Celestina, my own Celestina; but the wife of another—Go, Madam—I entreat you leave me—Go, or phrenzy may overtake me, and I may attempt impossibilities—to tear you from your husband.”—“Husband!” cried Celestina—“I have no husband.”—“Are you not married, then?—not married to Montague Thorold?”—“No, indeed—indeed I am not.”—“Not married—nor intending to be married?”—“Neither, indeed.”—“And you are at liberty, then, to be mine.”

mine."—"I am, if you know that we ought not to be divided."

Those only who have loved like Willoughby, and who, by a sudden transition, are raised from the abyss of despair to the height of felicity, can imagine what he felt at that moment. If the fear of Celestina's being married, had, for a moment, bereft him of reason; the certainty of her not being only free, but as passionately attached to him as ever, had, for a little time, an equally violent effect. Amidst her own transports, the extravagance of his terrified her. There was a wildness in his joy which made her tremble for his intellects. But, after a moment, her soft and melting voice; the tender assurances she gave him, that she lived only for him; that her heart had never been estranged from him, soothed and subdued the tumult of his beating heart. As his arms fondly encompassed her; as he rested his head on her bosom, he shed tears of tender gratitude; his spirits became calmer, and the native serene dignity of his mind returned.

He was not, however, quite tranquil enough to relate that night to Celestina the extraordinary

dinary series of events, which had led to the enchanting certainty he now possessed—that she was not his sister, but the daughter of Lady Horatia's brother; that regretted brother, to whose picture he had so great a resemblance. The information, however, such as in his present agitated state he was able to give, convinced her, not only that the fatal supposition of her being too nearly related to Willoughby was for ever removed; but, that she was born of parents to whom it was honourable to belong: and that she was nearly allied by blood to her kind protectress.

She desired Lady Horatia might be acquainted with this. “Not to-night,” said Willoughby—“I would to-night see nobody but you, my Celestina; hear no voice but yours—to-morrow I will explain it all. But now I *feel* my unexpected felicity too forcibly to be able to talk about it.”

He could not, however, determine to quit Celestina; nor were either of them conscious of the course of time, till Lady Horatia sent to let Celestina know supper was ready, and to beg the honour of Mr. Willoughby's company.

It was then that Celestina prevailed upon him to go from her, promising to be ready to walk with him by the dawn of the next morning. "And you must go with me," said he, "immediately to Alvestone; for I will not live another week without you." He then recollected that Alvestone might be sold; for he had never heard from Cathcart since he had given directions to have it disposed of. He paused a moment, and felt some uneasiness in the reflection: but the happiness he possessed was too great to allow him to feel any concern long. He smiled, and added, "If indeed Alvestone is still mine; and, if it is not, my Celestina will *create* for me a paradise wherever she is."

"And wherever you are," replied she, while tears of tenderness filled her eyes, "Celestina will *find* a paradise."

He then once more bade her good night—again returned—and again bade her adieu. "You are going now to rejoin the company," said he, "and there is Montague Thorold, of whom, I know it is a weakness, I do not love to think"—

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"It is indeed, Willoughby, a weakness unworthy of your generous heart; and I hope; what I can never have deserved that you should indulge"—"Well, well, my angel! I will not indulge it. But must you sup with them? They will fatigue you with questions—they will distress you by enquiries." "No; I had determined to send an excuse; for, indeed, my heart, yet wondering at its unexpected felicity, beats fearfully, and my trembling nerves have unfitted me for conversation."

At length Willoughby withdrew; and Celestina, with a pencil, told Lady Horatia, who waited the event of this extraordinary interview in the most uneasy suspense, that some extraordinary conversation with Mr. Willoughby had agitated her so much, that she could not return to the company, but must retire to her bed.

Montague Thorold, who was the most interested of the party, had suffered all the tortures of anxious jealousy while Celestina was absent. Every noise he heard in the passage; every time the door opened, he hoped she was coming.

coming. She came not. He went out, not to listen, but in hopes of meeting her. He heard a low murmur of voices—the tones were those of tenderness—Willoughby then was come to claim her: he was forgiven—and he himself had lost all hope.—He returned to the parlour, pale and dejected—his lips trembled; his eyes were still eagerly turned to the door. He heard nothing that was said to him; but unable to remain in his seat, again arose, went out, and returned. At length he heard the door of the parlour open, where Willoughby and Celestina were—he listened attentively—he heard her say, “Good night, dear Willoughby.” Willoughby seemed, as he answered, to kiss her hand. Poor Thorold could not bear it; but became more restless—again went to the door—came back—opened it to see if Celestina was coming—then helped the servant to put the chairs round the supper table, without knowing what he was doing—and sat down himself in one next to that which he had placed for her. The supper was announced, but no Celestina appeared. At length the servant brought in the note she had written. Lady Horatia read it, while poor  
Montague

Montague anxiously followed her eyes. She gave it to him across the table: he ran it over, and his solicitude becoming insupportable: he complained of being ill with the head-ach, and desired permission to go to his lodgings.

The eyes of his father were turned mournfully towards him, as he went out of the room. Mr. Thorold, however, did not speak, but he sighed—and Lady Horatia understood him. As for his wife, though she had been extremely averse to the thoughts of her son's marrying Celestina, while Celestina seemed to be no more than a rejected dependent on the Willoughby family; yet now, since Lady Horatia Howard had adopted her, she appeared to be altogether as fond of the connection—so easily are minds like her's changed by adventitious circumstances, and influenced by sounds. The notice Lady Horatia took of her, and her daughter Bettenson, delighted and elated her; rendering her so disgustingly civil, that only the regard Lady Horatia felt for Mr. Thorold and Montague, would have induced her to support the awkward and offensive adulation of Mrs. Thorold.

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The lady of the house was so anxious about Celestina, that only her general politeness, or what is usually termed, *l'usage du monde*, enabled her to acquit herself in the usual forms towards her guests.

The supper was short and dull—the conversation being divided between Captain Betenson, who related a long story of a duel between Jack Marsham, of his regiment, and one Mr. Abbersley, an ensign in the seventeenth; the merits of which nobody understood—and for the event of which, nobody cared—and Mrs. Thorold, who described a dinner and ball given at Exeter, the week before, by a banker of that place, on occasion of his daughter's marriage. With the termination of these dissertations, the supper ended; and Mr. Thorold, who had long been uneasy and impatient, withdrew with his family.

Lady Horatia then hastened to the chamber of Celestina; she was just in bed—but knowing who it was tapped at the door, begged her to come in:—

“Well, my dear child,” said Lady Horatia, “and what is all this? I am impatient to know.”—“And I, Madam, impatient to relate,

late, though this evening I am quite unable to undertake it, all the extraordinary circumstances recounted to me by Willoughby.” “ You are then related to him?” “ No, thank Heaven, I am not—I thank Heaven too, that I am related to you.” “ To me?” Celestina then gave a brief account of her birth, and the way by which Willoughby had learnt those particulars he had recounted: Lady Horatia embraced her with tears of rapture. Every circumstance she recollected of her brother’s visits to France, confirmed the truth of Willoughby’s story; and she very perfectly recollected the desponding state of mind in which he went to America, after his last return from thence. His imprisonment for a few weeks in the Bastille, which was imputed to some indiscretion, and that he himself never otherwise explained—exactly corresponded with what the Count de Bellegarde had related. But while every concurrent testimony evinced the truth of that narrative, Lady Horatia could not account for her brother’s never having mentioned his marriage, or his daughter.—“ Perhaps, however,” said she, “ he might have reasons for this, which I cannot penetrate.

penetrate. My father was harsh, obstinate, and avaricious; and always expected Ormond would marry as his elder brother did, to aggrandize his family—this he used frequently to be teased to do, but always refused—and for some years, his disposition retained nothing of its former vivacity, but an ardour for war, in which he seemed, I often told him, desirous rather of death than of promotion: and he answered me more than once, “That I guessed right—for that he was weary of life.” I own, I not unfrequently suspected, that some unfortunate attachment had so shaded his natural gay and vigorous mind, with gloomy depression.—I have told him so—and he has replied, “That whatever might have been the case, he had no attachment then.”

At length, as Celestina extremely needed repose, Lady Horatia left her, reflecting, with infinite delight, on the kindness she had shewn her, as an orphan and a stranger, while she had, in fact, been protecting the daughter of her beloved brother. With pleasure too she now thought of Willoughby, since Celestina's happiness was to be restored by her union with him. But poor Montague Thorold, de-

jected and in despair, relinquishing all those charming hopes, which, with more pity than prudence, she had herself encouraged him to cherish, presented himself to her imagination, and greatly abated the satisfaction, with which she thought of the approaching felicity of Willoughby and her niece.

She determined, however, to mitigate, as much as she could, the force of this cruel blow—and, early the next morning, while Celestina was walking with the happy and enraptured Willoughby, she sent for the elder Mr. Thorold, and related to him all she had learned from Celestina the evening before.

“ I now blame myself, my good friend,” said she, “ for the part I have taken—but who could foresee this?—Yet, I own, I fear the consequences, and heartily wish I had never given so many opportunities to your son, of contemplating those perfections of mind and person, which he will never, I fear, be able to forget.”

Mr Thorold knew too well that this observation was just—and dreaded, lest the loss even of reason itself should be the consequence of Celestina's marriage—he returned home, however,

however, immediately, to relate to Montague the probability there was, that this event would immediately happen. But, however tenderly he communicated such fatal intelligence, he found his son more affected by it, than even his paternal fears had represented.

A silent and heavy despondence took possession of him. He neither complained of, nor reproached any one—but persisted in saying, that he would see Celestina—take a last leave of her, and then try to reconcile himself to his fate.

But in his manner of saying this, there was something more distressing to his father, than he would have felt from the wildest ravings of despair—he entreated him to relinquish his project of seeing Celestina.—“Why should you see her, Montague,” said he; “to what purpose?—You own, that while Willoughby was in question, you entertained no hope—That Celestina has never afforded you any since; but that in spite of her assurances that she could never feel a second attachment—that you have persevered, and *taken* that hope which she refused to give—you have no one, therefore, to blame; and if you have sought

pain, you must learn to bear it. But after all that has passed, I cannot consent to your inflicting it on Celestina, or hazarding the possibility of giving uneasiness to her husband."

"Husband!" cried Montague Thorold—"he is not her husband yet—but if he were—can my humble adoration offend him—when I mean to bid her an everlasting adieu?—She will console my sick heart by tender pity—She will bid me be at peace—and I may try then to obey her—The sound of her voice is to me so soothing—that if she does not refuse it, I must hear it once more speak to me in accents of kindness."

Mr. Thorold, finding every thing he could say to dissuade Montague from indulging this unhappy inclination quite ineffectual, became extremely uneasy; and dreaded, lest some alarming consequence should arise from an interview, which he thought Willoughby could not approve, even if it were reasonable or proper in his son to ask it.

But Willoughby, now perfectly secure of the affections of Celestina, was too generous, and too noble-minded, not to feel pity for his unfortunate rival. His own happiness, great

as it was, would have been more complete, if he could have believed Montague Thorold less unhappy.—“Would to Heaven,” said he, as he spoke of him to Celestina, “Would to Heaven that he could see Anzoletta, and transfer to her that affection, which, while it is fixed on you, can serve only to render him miserable.”—Celestina joined most cordially in this wish.—“He deserves to be happy. I believe,” said she; “and the desire you express to see him so, is worthy of the heart of my Willoughby.”

But however liberal and reasonable Willoughby was in regard to a competitor, from whom, though he had suffered much, he had now nothing to fear; he was not so patient under any circumstance that was likely to impede his union with Celestina.—All that she or Lady Horatia could urge to him on the propriety and necessity of a short delay, for preparations and forms, he treated as ridiculous—and so vehemently insisted on the necessity of fulfilling the promise he had made to the Count de Bellegarde, at parting with him, to return to him immediately with Celestina as his wife—that their opposition was

to little purpose.—So totally engrossed, however, had Willoughby been by his fears lest Celestina might be lost to him, that he did not even know whether he had a house to take her to—but, as with him, all places were alike to her, he sent an express that morning to Cathcart, informing him, that he should be at Exeter the next day with Celestina, desiring him to meet him there with Jessy, and to go with them to Alvestone, if Alvestone was yet in his possession.

He dispatched another messenger to London for a special licence to be married at Alvestone, or Exeter; and obviating every remaining scruple, he prevailed on Celestina to set out with him that evening for the latter place, with the consent of Lady Horatia, who promised to follow them in a few days.

The distance was so short, that though it was late in the day, after Willoughby's arrival at Exmouth, before this was determined upon, they were at Exeter by seven in the evening; and in an hour afterwards, Cathcart and Jessy arrived also.

Cathcart not only informed Willoughby that his estate was still his, but put into hands  
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those letters that brought the intelligence of that acquisition of fortune which came by the death of Lord Castlenorth.—The satisfaction of this intelligence, the pleasure of meeting Cathcart and Jeffy, who were overwhelmed with joy to see them—the certainty of returning together to a place they both so fondly loved, seemed to complete the happiness of the long divided lovers.—Early the next morning they reached Alvestone, where, in the absence of Mr. Thorold, his curate joined the hands of Willoughby and Celestina, above eighteen months after that period, when they believed themselves separated for ever.

In three days Lady Horatia arrived at Alvestone; and the additional pleasure her company gave them, was checked only by the account she gave of the situation of Montague Thorold—who not having been allowed to see Celestina, the time of whose departure from Exmouth had been industriously concealed from him, had sunk into such a state of despondence, as made his father tremble for his reason, if not for his life.

For Vavasour too, whom Willoughby had always loved, he could not help feeling con-

cern.—He knew not whither to direct to him ; but from all the accounts he was able to gain, he feared that all the good qualities of his heart and understanding were obscured, if not destroyed, by the dissolute stile of life into which he had plunged with such avidity, since their last parting.—He endeavoured, however, to counteract the impressions of these only alloys to supreme happiness, by reflecting on the probable felicity of other friends, and particularly of the Count of Bellegarde ; from whom, ten days after his marriage, he received a letter, informing him, that he was then going to Perpignan ; empowered to release his wife from her convent—and that they should go, together with their Anzoletta, immediately to Rochemorte—where he besought Willoughby to rejoin him, with Celestina—promising, that if he would do so, they would return with him, and pass the winter all together in England.

Though it was now late in the year, and though Celestina would have preferred remaining at Alvestone, where she had fixed all her ideas of happiness, yet the wishes of her uncle, and the melancholy satisfaction of visiting

sitting the place where her mother had lived—and where she died a victim to parental harshness, and maternal grief; together with the inclination Willoughby shewed to gratify the Count, and introduce his wife to him and Anzoletta, determined her to make no objection to their immediate departure.—There was, indeed, no time to lose; as the winter was so near.—Lady Horatia too, who waited impatiently an interview with Monsieur de Bellegarde, though she had not health to undertake such a journey, hastened them as much as possible; and in something less than a month after Willoughby called Celestina his, he presented her, at Rochemorte, to her uncle de Bellegarde, to Jacquolina, and Anzoletta. To the two former she appeared the precious representative of their two beloved and regretted friends; the tender recollection of of whom, added to her own merit, made her to them an object almost of adoration—while Anzoletta loved her as a sister, to whom she became more tenderly attached, from taste and affection, than even that near tie of blood alone could have attached her.

With what melancholy pleasure did the

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Count.

Count tie round the neck of Celestina that picture of her mother, which her father, as he was dying, had taken from his own bosom—with an injunction, never to part with it, but to his daughter.—And how many tears did Celestina shed, as, leaning on the arm of Willoughby, he pointed out to her the spot, which the Count had shewn him, as the grave of Genevieve.—Willoughby kissed those tears away, as they filled her eyes—and bade her turn from the too frequent recollection of the past, to those scenes of future happiness, which love, friendship, and fortune, seemed to be preparing for them.

In the romantic and magnificent scenes round the castle the poetical taste of Celestina was highly gratified. Willoughby took her the spot where he had been lost in the fortunate night that eventually led him to the residence of the Count of Bellegarde. They visited together the humble cottage of Le Laurier, whose family they loaded with kindness; and traced with her the scenes which were so many years before witnesses to the clandestine marriages of Genevieve and Jacqueline.

Winter,

Winter, however, put an end to these excursions in the mountains; and the Count de Bellegarde, having completed the settlement of his affairs, agreed, at the earnest request of Willoughby and Celestina, to go with his wife and daughter to England.

On their journey thither, they met at Paris Captain and Mrs. Cavanaugh. They found the former become a man of the utmost importance, and arrogantly enjoying the splendour of his new situation, in a country where he had appeared in one so very different. Mrs. Cavanaugh seemed to affect being happy—and to disdain all she had relinquished to obtain that happiness her own way. But, from some strange caprice, she now appeared so fond of Willoughby, that had Celestina been liable to jealousy—or had Cavanaugh really cared for his wife, they might both, in her manner, have found sufficient cause of discontent. Mrs. Cavanaugh related to Willoughby all the artifices her mother had used to break off his marriage with Celestina; and when he expressed his wonder that Lady Castlenorth should go such lengths in an affair in which her interest did not appear to be immediately

mediately or particularly concerned, she answered, in her usual sneering way—"If you could know my mother so well as I do—but it is impossible by words to do her justice—you would no longer wonder. Her scheme lay much deeper than you were aware of."

Lady Castlenorth, to console herself for the defection of Captain Cavanaugh, had taken, as her travelling companion, a young Abbé, who, discontented with the prevailing politics of his country, found in her at once an admirer of his person and character, and a strenuous supporter of his aristocratic principles—and, what was yet better than either, he found himself sharing a fortune beyond what he had ever dreamed of possessing. This well assorted pair were at Brussels—and Mrs. Cavanaugh diverted herself with some sarcastic remarks on the Director chosen by her mother—of whom she always spoke with a degree of rancour which made Celestina tremble, while Willoughby shuddered to recollect how near he once was becoming the husband of one who could thus express herself towards her mother.

Captain and Mrs. Cavanaugh were going  
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to Italy.—The happy party, who took leave of them, hastened to England, where, on their arrival in London, Lady Horatia joined them, and they were soon fixed at Alvestone, in such perfect felicity as is seldom enjoyed, and still more rarely deserved.—The first enquiry of Celestina was for Mr. Thorold and his family. She learned that Captain Thorold was the great friend and favourite of Lady Molyneux, with whom he was gone to Ireland to the displeasure of his father, who had however no influence over him, and whose disappointment in his eldest son was embittered by the condition into which a hopeless and incurable passion had thrown the youngest.

Celestina, who could not reflect, without great pain, on the unhappiness with which the days of her excellent friend were thus over-clouded, took an early opportunity, after her being settled at Alvestone, to desire an interview with the elder Mr. Thorold. He came—and she saw with redoubled concern, the ravage which anxiety had made on his manly face and figure, even in a few short months. He related to her, hardly refraining from tears, the sad change that had happened  
in

in the temper and talents of his son—"I have sometimes thought," said he, "that you, my dear Madam, and you only, can rouse him from these alienations of mind—I was averse to his seeing you before you went abroad—but now I wish it: your reason may reconcile him to his fate—you pity, soothe him—or, be the event of your meeting what it may, no change can, I think, be for the worse." Celestina promised to see him—and his father contrived, with her, the means of procuring this interview; for Montague now shunned every body, and very frequently would not appear, even to his own family.

Celestina did not, however, mean to meet him alone; but to shew him, in Anzoletta, beauty, understanding, and sweetness, with a heart untouched by any former passion, and worthy of his. Her generous intentions succeeded.—Montague Thorold, struck with the resemblance between them, and particularly with the voice of Anzoletta, was soon as passionately attached to her, as a man could be, who had once loved Celestina herself. The Count of Bellegarde, who intended to bestow her, with her ample fortune, on an Englishman.

man, and a Protestant, hesitated not a moment, in consenting to an union which would, he found, make his daughter happy; and, eight months after the marriage of Willoughby and Celestina, Anzoletta gave her hand, in the chapel of Alvestone, to Montague Thorold.

Willoughby had now but one wish unfulfilled — for every pecuniary difficulty, the munificence of the Count de Bellegarde, and the legacy of Lord Castlenorth, had removed — and this one wish was, to see Vavasour such as a reasonable being, with every reasonable means of happiness in his power, ought to be. But in this, as he had no second Anzoletta to give him, and should have feared his want of steadiness if he had, he almost despaired of being gratified.

Vavasour, however, sometimes visited at Alvestone; and, unlike Montague Thorold, he seemed to have conquered his extravagant passion for Celestina, since it was become hopeless. He had, unluckily for him, taken up no permanent affection in its place; but lost his health, and his fortune in pursuits which could not afford him even a temporary possession

possession of that happiness for which he still declared himself to be in search.

When Celestina reflected on his kindness to Mrs. Elphinstone and her children, who now lived in comfort on the provision he had made for them; and on many other generous and noble actions; she could not but lament, with Willoughby, that infelicity of which he continually complained, even amid his wildest and most determined perseverance in the career of dissolute pleasure. But for this source of regret, as there seemed to be no remedy within her power, she did not suffer it to embitter the satisfaction she derived from almost every other friend.

Lady Horatia no longer complained of that tedium which, at the beginning of their acquaintance, seemed to have rendered life indifferent to her. She had now, in Willoughby, and his lovely wife, objects of her affection; and hoped to grow old amidst their children. Monsieur and Madam de Bellegarde, were more acutely sensible of their present happiness, from the poignancy of their past afflictions; and their daughter, the object of their tender solicitude, made the felicity of a worthy man,

man, who deserved the affection she felt for him. In Cathcart and Jeffy, Celestina beheld the earliest objects of her beneficence—enjoying all that affluence and mutual tenderness could bestow—And the widowed heart of Mrs. Elphinstone was at ease, not only by her own present independence, but from the assurances Willoughby had given her, of providing for her boys, as soon as they were of the age when they could be put to professions. The elder Mr. Thorold, too, her venerable and respectable friend, was restored to happiness, in contemplating that of his son: and above all, Celestina beheld in Willoughby, the best and most affectionate of husbands—whose whole life was dedicated to the purpose of making her happy—and whose only apprehension seemed to be, that with all he could do, he must fall infinitely short of that degree of merit towards either heaven or earth, which that fortunate being ought to possess, who was blessed with so lovely and perfect a creature as Celestina.

THE END.



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